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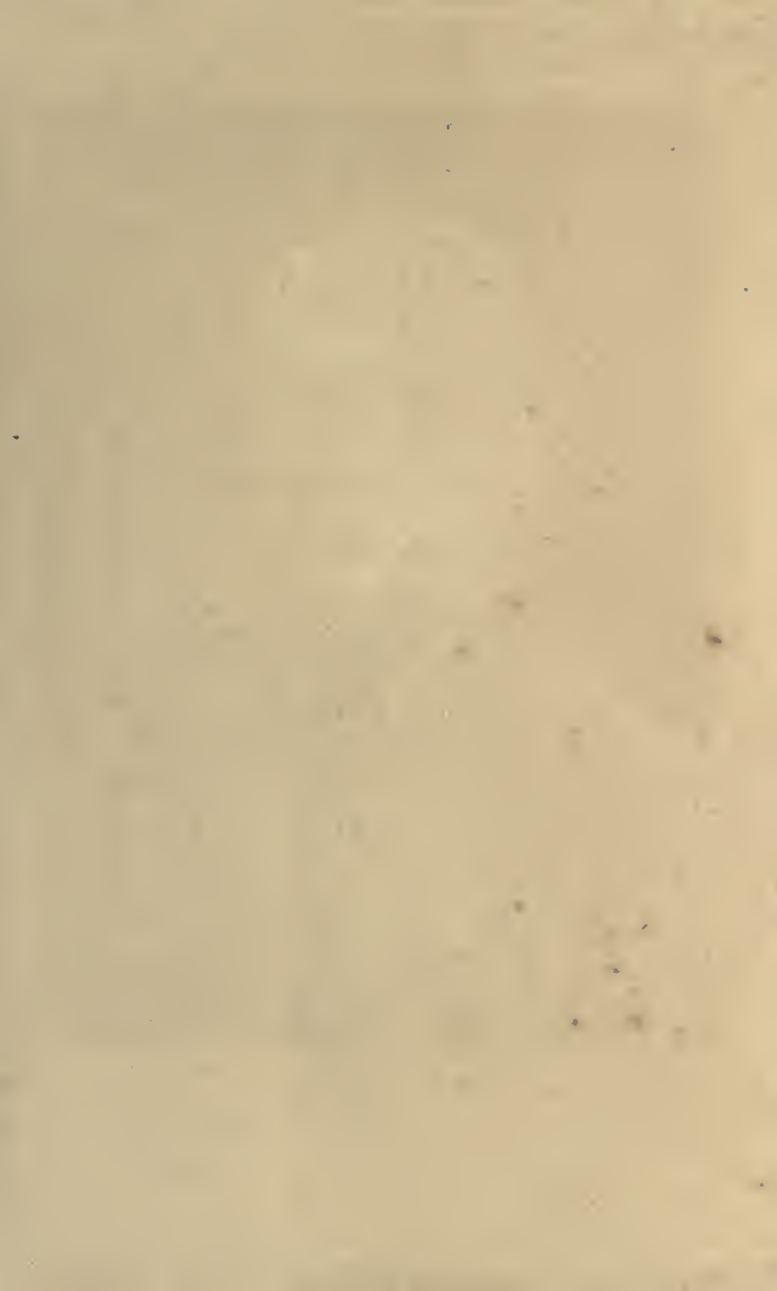
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VOL. VI







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THE POEMS  
OF  
ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

IN SIX VOLUMES

VOLUME VI  
A MIDSUMMER HOLIDAY  
ASTROPHEL  
A CHANNEL PASSAGE  
AND OTHER POEMS

LONDON  
CHATTO & WINDUS

1911

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A

MIDSUMMER HOLIDAY

AND OTHER POEMS





# A MIDSUMMER HOLIDAY

TO THEODORE WATTS



## THE SEABOARD

THE sea is at ebb, and the sound of her utmost word  
Is soft as the least wave's lapse in a still small reach.  
From bay into bay, on quest of a goal deferred,  
From headland ever to headland and breach to  
breach

Where earth gives ear to the message that all days  
preach

With changes of gladness and sadness that cheer and  
chide,

The lone way lures me along by a chance untried  
That haply, if hope dissolve not and faith be whole,  
Not all for nought shall I seek, with a dream for  
guide,

The goal that is not, and ever again the goal.

The trackless ways are untravelled of sail or bird ;  
The hoar wave hardly recedes from the soundless  
beach.

The silence of instant noon goes nigh to be heard,  
The viewless void to be visible : all and each,  
A closure of calm no clamour of storm can breach  
Concludes and confines and absorbs them on either  
side,

All forces of light and of life and the live world's  
pride.

Sands hardly ruffled of ripples that hardly roll  
Seem ever to show as in reach of a swift brief stride  
The goal that is not, and ever again the goal.

The waves are a joy to the seamew, the meads to the  
herd,

And a joy to the heart is a goal that it may not reach.  
No sense that for ever the limits of sense engird,  
No hearing or sight that is vassal to form or speech,  
Learns ever the secret that shadow and silence teach,  
Hears ever the notes that or ever they swell subside,  
Sees ever the light that lights not the loud world's  
tide,

Clasps ever the cause of the lifelong scheme's control  
Wherethrough we pursue, till the waters of life be  
dried,

The goal that is not, and ever again the goal.

Friend, what have we sought or seek we, whate'er  
betide,

Though the seaboard shift its mark from afar  
descried,

But aims whence ever anew shall arise the soul?  
Love, thought, song, life, but show for a glimpse and  
hide

The goal that is not, and ever again the goal.

## II

## A HAVEN

EAST and north a waste of waters, south and west  
Lonelier lands than dreams in sleep would feign  
to be,

When the soul goes forth on travel, and is prest  
Round and compassed in with clouds that flash and  
flee.

Dells without a streamlet, downs without a tree,  
Cirques of hollow cliff that crumble, give their guest  
Little hope, till hard at hand he pause, to see  
Where the small town smiles, a warm still sea-side  
nest.

Many a lone long mile, by many a headland's crest,  
Down by many a garden dear to bird and bee,  
Up by many a sea-down's bare and breezy breast,  
Winds the sandy strait of road where flowers run  
free.

Here along the deep steep lanes by field and lea  
Knights have carolled, pilgrims chanted, on their  
quest,

Haply, ere a roof rose toward the bleak strand's lee,  
Where the small town smiles, a warm still sea-side  
nest.

Are the wild lands cursed perchance of time, or blest,  
Sad with fear or glad with comfort of the sea?  
Are the ruinous towers of churches fallen on rest  
Watched of wanderers woful now, glad once as we,  
When the night has all men's eyes and hearts in fee,  
When the soul bows down dethroned and dispossess?  
Yet must peace keep guard, by day's and night's  
decree,  
Where the small town smiles, a warm still sea-side  
nest.

Friend, the lonely land is bright for you and me  
All its wild ways through : but this methinks is best,  
Here to watch how kindly time and change agree  
Where the small town smiles, a warm still sea-side  
nest.

## III

## ON A COUNTRY ROAD

ALONG these low pleached lanes, on such a day,  
So soft a day as this, through shade and sun,  
With glad grave eyes that scanned the glad wild  
way,

And heart still hovering o'er a song begun,  
And smile that warmed the world with benison,  
Our father, lord long since of lordly rhyme,  
Long since hath haply ridden, when the lime  
Bloomed broad above him, flowering where he came.  
Because thy passage once made warm this clime,  
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Each year that England clothes herself with May,  
She takes thy likeness on her. Time hath spun  
Fresh raiment all in vain and strange array  
For earth and man's new spirit, fain to shun  
Things past for dreams of better to be won,  
Through many a century since thy funeral chime  
Rang, and men deemed it death's most direful crime  
To have spared not thee for very love or shame ;  
And yet, while mists round last year's memories  
climb,  
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Each turn of the old wild road whereon we stray,  
Meseems, might bring us face to face with one  
Whom seeing we could not but give thanks, and pray  
For England's love our father and her son  
To speak with us as once in days long done  
With all men, sage and churl and monk and mime,  
Who knew not as we know the soul sublime  
That sang for song's love more than lust of fame.  
Yet, though this be not, yet, in happy time,  
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Friend, even as bees about the flowering thyme,  
Years crowd on years, till hoar decay begrime  
Names once beloved ; but, seeing the sun the same,  
As birds of autumn fain to praise the prime,  
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.



## IV

## THE MILL GARDEN

STATELY stand the sunflowers, glowing down the  
garden-side,  
Ranged in royal rank arow along the warm grey  
wall,  
Whence their deep disks burn at rich midnoon afire  
with pride,  
Even as though their beams indeed were sunbeams,  
and the tall  
Sceptral stems bore stars whose reign endures, not  
flowers that fall.  
Lowlier laughs and basks the kindlier flower of  
homelier fame,  
Held by love the sweeter that it blooms in Shake-  
speare's name,  
Fragrant yet as though his hand had touched and  
made it thrill,  
Like the whole world's heart, with warm new life  
and gladdening flame.  
Fair befall the fair green close that lies below the  
mill !

Softlier here the flower-soft feet of refluxent seasons  
glide,  
Lightlier breathes the long low note of change's  
gentler call.

Wind and storm and landslip feed the lone sea's  
gulf outside,  
Half a seamew's first flight hence ; but scarce may  
these appal  
Peace, whose perfect seal is set for signet here on all.  
Steep and deep and sterile, under fields no plough  
can tame,  
Dip the cliffs full-fledged with poppies red as love or  
shame,  
Wide wan daisies bleak and bold, or herbage harsh  
and chill ;  
Here the full clove pinks and wallflowers crown the  
love they claim.  
Fair befall the fair green close that lies below the  
mill !

All the place breathes low, but not for fear lest ill  
betide,  
Soft as roses answering roses, or a dove's recall.  
Little heeds it how the seaward banks may stoop and  
slide,  
How the winds and years may hold all outer things  
in thrall,  
How their wrath may work on hoar church tower  
and boundary wall.  
Far and wide the waste and ravin of their rule pro-  
claim  
Change alone the changeless lord of things, alone  
the same :  
Here a flower is stronger than the winds that work  
their will,  
Or the years that wing their way through darkness  
toward their aim.  
Fair befall the fair green close that lies below the  
mill !

Friend, the home that smiled us welcome hither when  
we came,

When we pass again with summer, surely should  
reclaim

Somewhat given of heart's thanksgiving more than  
words fulfil—

More than song, were song more sweet than all but  
love, might frame.

Fair befall the fair green close that lies below the  
mill !

## V

## A SEA-MARK

RAINS have left the sea-banks ill to climb :  
Waveward sinks the loosening seaboard's floor :  
Half the sliding cliffs are mire and slime.  
Earth, a fruit rain-rotted to the core,  
Drops dissolving down in flakes, that pour  
Dense as gouts from eaves grown foul with grime.  
One sole rock which years that scathe not score  
Stands a sea-mark in the tides of time.

Time were even as even the rainiest clime,  
Life were even as even this lapsing shore,  
Might not aught outlive their trustless prime :  
Vainly fear would wail or hope implore,  
Vainly grief revile or love adore  
Seasons clothed in sunshine, rain, or rime.  
Now for me one comfort held in store  
Stands a sea-mark in the tides of time.

Once, by fate's default or chance's crime,  
Each apart, our burdens each we bore ;  
Heard, in monotonous like bells that chime,  
Chime the sounds of sorrows, float and soar

Joy's full carols, near or far before ;  
Heard not yet across the alternate rhyme  
Time's tongue tell what sign set fast of yore  
Stands a sea-mark in the tides of time.

Friend, the sign we knew not heretofore  
Towers in sight here present and sublime.  
Faith in faith established evermore  
Stands a sea-mark in the tides of time.

## VI

## THE CLIFFSIDE PATH

SEAWARD goes the sun, and homeward by the down  
We, before the night upon his grave be sealed.  
Low behind us lies the bright steep murmuring  
town,

High before us heaves the steep rough silent field.  
Breach by ghastlier breach, the cliffs collapsing  
yield :

Half the path is broken, half the banks divide ;  
Flawed and crumbled, riven and rent, they cleave  
and slide

Toward the ridged and wrinkled waste of girdling  
sand

Deep beneath, whose furrows tell how far and wide  
Wind is lord and change is sovereign of the strand.

Star by star on the unsunned waters twirling down.  
Golden spear-points glance against a silver shield.  
Over banks and bents, across the headland's crown,  
As by pulse of gradual plumes through twilight  
wheeled,

Soft as sleep, the waking wind awakes the weald.  
Moor and copse and fallow, near or far descried,  
Feel the mild wings move, and gladden where they  
glide :

Silence, uttering love that all things understand,  
Bids the quiet fields forget that hard beside  
Wind is lord and change is sovereign of the strand.

Yet may sight, ere all the hoar soft shade grow  
brown,

Hardly reckon half the rifts and rents unhealed  
Where the scarred cliffs downward sundering drive  
and drown,

Hewn as if with stroke of swords in tempest steeled,  
Wielded as the night's will and the wind's may  
wield.

Crowned and zoned in vain with flowers of autumn-  
tide,

Soon the blasts shall break them, soon the waters  
hide ;

Soon, where late we stood, shall no man ever stand.  
Life and love seek harbourage on the landward side :  
Wind is lord and change is sovereign of the strand.

Friend, though man be less than these, for all his  
pride,

Yet, for all his weakness, shall not hope abide ?

Wind and change can wreck but life and waste but  
land :

Truth and trust are sure, though here till all subside  
Wind is lord and change is sovereign of the strand.



## VII

## IN THE WATER

THE sea is awake, and the sound of the song of the  
joy of her waking is rolled  
From afar to the star that recedes, from anear to the  
wastes of the wild wide shore.  
Her call is a trumpet compelling us homeward : if  
dawn in her east be acold,  
From the sea shall we crave not her grace to rekindle  
the life that it kindled before,  
Her breath to requicken, her bosom to rock us, her  
kisses to bless as of yore ?  
For the wind, with his wings half open, at pause in  
the sky, neither fettered nor free,  
Leans waveward and flutters the ripple to laughter :  
and fain would the twain of us be  
Where lightly the wave yearns forward from under  
the curve of the deep dawn's dome,  
And, full of the morning and fired with the pride of  
the glory thereof and the glee,  
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and  
beseeches, athirst for the foam.

Life holds not an hour that is better to live in : the  
past is a tale that is told,  
The future a sun-flecked shadow, alive and asleep,  
with a blessing in store.



As we give us again to the waters, the rapture of  
limbs that the waters enfold  
Is less than the rapture of spirit whereby, though the  
burden it quits were sore,  
Our souls and the bodies they wield at their will are  
absorbed in the life they adore—  
In the life that endures no burden, and bows not the  
forehead, and bends not the knee—  
In the life everlasting of earth and of heaven, in the  
laws that atone and agree,  
In the measureless music of things, in the fervour of  
forces that rest or that roam,  
That cross and return and reissue, as I after you and  
as you after me  
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and  
beseeches, athirst for the foam.

For, albeit he were less than the least of them, haply  
the heart of a man may be bold  
To rejoice in the word of the sea as a mother's that  
saith to the son she bore,  
Child, was not the life in thee mine, and my spirit  
the breath in thy lips from of old?  
Have I let not thy weakness exult in my strength,  
and thy foolishness learn of my lore?  
Have I helped not or healed not thine anguish, or  
made not the might of thy gladness more?  
And surely his heart should answer, The light of the  
love of my life is in thee.  
She is fairer than earth, and the sun is not fairer,  
the wind is not blither than she :  
From my youth hath she shown me the joy of her  
bays that I crossed, of her cliffs that I clomb,

Till now that the twain of us here, in desire of the  
dawn and in trust of the sea,  
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and  
beseeches, athirst for the foam.

Friend, earth is a harbour of refuge for winter, a  
covert whereunder to flee  
When day is the vassal of night, and the strength of  
the hosts of her mightier than he ;  
But here is the presence adored of me, here my desire  
is at rest and at home.  
There are cliffs to be climbed upon land, there are  
ways to be trodden and ridden : but we  
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and  
beseeches, athirst for the foam.

## VIII

## THE SUNBOWS

SPRAY of song that springs in April, light of love that  
laughs through May,

Live and die and live for ever : nought of all things  
far less fair

Keeps a surer life than these that seem to pass like  
fire away.

In the souls they live which are but all the brighter  
that they were ;

In the hearts that kindle, thinking what delight of old  
was there.

Wind that shapes and lifts and shifts them bids  
perpetual memory play

Over dreams and in and out of deeds and thoughts  
which seem to wear

Light that leaps and runs and revels through the  
springing flames of spray.

Dawn is wild upon the waters where we drink of  
dawn to-day :

Wide, from wave to wave rekindling in rebound  
through radiant air,

Flash the fires unwoven and woven again of wind  
that works in play,

Working wonders more than heart may note or sight  
may wellnigh dare,

Wefts of rarer light than colours rain from heaven,  
though this be rare.  
Arch on arch unbuilt in building, reared and ruined  
ray by ray,  
Breaks and brightens, laughs and lessens, even till  
eyes may hardly bear  
Light that leaps and runs and revels through the  
springing flames of spray.

Year on year sheds light and music rolled and flashed  
from bay to bay  
Round the summer capes of time and winter head-  
lands keen and bare  
Whence the soul keeps watch, and bids her vassal  
memory watch and pray,  
If perchance the dawn may quicken, or perchance the  
midnight spare.  
Silence quells not music, darkness takes not sunlight  
in her snare ;  
Shall not joys endure that perish ? Yea, saith dawn,  
though night say nay :  
Life on life goes out, but very life enkindles every-  
where  
Light that leaps and runs and revels through the  
springing flames of spray.

Friend, were life no more than this is, well would yet  
the living fare.  
All aflower and all afire and all flung heavenward,  
who shall say  
Such a flash of life were worthless ? This is worth  
a world of care—  
Light that leaps and runs and revels through the  
springing flames of spray.

## IX

## ON THE VERGE

HERE begins the sea that ends not till the world's  
end. Where we stand,  
Could we know the next high sea-mark set beyond  
these waves that gleam,  
We should know what never man hath known, nor  
eye of man hath scanned.  
Nought beyond these coiling clouds that melt like  
fume of shrines that steam  
Breaks or stays the strength of waters till they pass  
our bounds of dream.  
Where the waste Land's End leans westward, all the  
seas it watches roll  
Find their border fixed beyond them, and a world-  
wide shore's control :  
These whereby we stand no shore beyond us limits :  
these are free.  
Gazing hence, we see the water that grows iron  
round the Pole,  
From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in  
all the sea.

Sail on sail along the sea-line fades and flashes ; here  
on land  
Flash and fade the wheeling wings on wings of mews  
that plunge and scream.

Hour on hour along the line of life and time's evasive  
strand

Shines and darkens, wanes and waxes, slays and  
dies : and scarce they seem

More than motes that thronged and trembled in the  
brief noon's breath and beam.

Some with crying and wailing, some with notes like  
sound of bells that toll,

Some with sighing and laughing, some with words  
that blessed and made us whole,

Passed, and left us, and we know not what they were,  
nor what were we.

Would we know, being mortal? Never breath of  
answering whisper stole

From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in  
all the sea.

Shadows, would we question darkness? Ere our  
eyes and brows be fanned

Round with airs of twilight, washed with dew from  
sleep's eternal stream,

Would we know sleep's guarded secret? Ere the fire  
consume the brand,

Would it know if yet its ashes may requicken? yet  
we deem

Surely man may know, or ever night unyoke her  
starry team,

What the dawn shall be, or if the dawn shall be not :  
yea, the scroll

Would we read of sleep's dark scripture, pledge of  
peace or doom of dole.

Ah, but here man's heart leaps, yearning toward the  
gloom with venturous glee,



Though his pilot eye behold nor bay nor harbour, rock  
nor shoal,

From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in  
all the sea.

Friend, who knows if death indeed have life or life  
have death for goal?

Day nor night can tell us, nor may seas declare nor  
skies unroll

What has been from everlasting, or if aught shall  
always be.

Silence answering only strikes response reverberate  
on the soul

From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in  
all the sea.

# THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF KING CHARLES THE FIRST

IN WHICH ARE CONTAINED THE

CAUSES, THE CONDUCT, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE

WAR, WHICH WAS BROUGHT ON BY HIS MAJESTY'S

PARLIAMENT, AND THE PARLIAMENT OF SCOTLAND

AGAINST HIMSELF, AND THE CONDUCT OF THE

WAR, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE

WAR, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE

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WAR, AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE



A NEW-YEAR ODE

TO VICTOR HUGO



I

TWICE twelve times have the springs of years refilled  
 Their fountains from the river-head of time  
 Since by the green sea's marge, ere autumn chilled  
 Waters and woods with sense of changing clime,  
 A great light rose upon my soul, and thrilled  
 My spirit of sense with sense of spheres in chime,  
 Sound as of song wherewith a God would build  
 Towers that no force of conquering war might climb.  
     Wind shook the glimmering sea  
     Even as my soul in me  
 Was stirred with breath of mastery more sublime,  
     Uplift and borne along  
     More thunderous tides of song,  
 Where wave rang back to wave more rapturous  
     rhyme  
     And world on world flashed lordlier light  
 Than ever lit the wandering ways of ships by night.

II

The spirit of God, whose breath of life is song,  
 Moved, though his word was human, on the face  
 Of those deep waters of the soul, too long  
 Dumb, dark, and cold, that waited for the grace  
 Wherewith day kindles heaven : and as some throng  
 Of quiring wings fills full some lone chill place  
 With sudden rush of life and joy, more strong  
 Than death or sorrow or all night's darkling race,

So was my heart, that heard  
All heaven in each deep word,  
Filled full with light of thought, and waxed apace  
Itself more wide and deep,  
To take that gift and keep  
And cherish while my days fulfilled their space  
A record wide as earth and sea,  
The Legend writ of Ages past and yet to be.

## III

As high the chant of Paradise and Hell  
Rose, when the soul of Milton gave it wings ;  
As wide the sweep of Shakespeare's empire fell,  
When life had bared for him her secret springs ;  
But not his various soul might range and dwell  
Amid the mysteries of the founts of things ;  
Nor Milton's range of rule so far might swell  
Across the kingdoms of forgotten kings.  
Men, centuries, nations, time,  
Life, death, love, trust, and crime,  
Rang record through the change of smitten strings  
That felt an exile's hand  
Sound hope for every land  
More loud than storm's cloud-sundering trumpet  
rings,  
And bid strong death for judgment rise,  
And life bow down for judgment of his awless eyes

## IV

And death, soul-stricken in his strength, resigned  
The keeping of the sepulchres to song ;  
And life was humbled, and his height of mind  
Brought lower than lies a grave-stone fallen along ;

And like a ghost and like a God mankind  
Rose clad with light and darkness ; weak and  
strong,  
Clean and unclean, with eyes afire and blind,  
Wounded and whole, fast bound with cord and  
thong,  
Free ; fair and foul, sin-stained,  
And sinless ; crowned and chained ;  
Fleet-limbed, and halting all his lifetime long ;  
Glad of deep shame, and sad  
For shame's sake ; wise, and mad ;  
Girt round with love and hate of right and wrong ;  
Armed and disarmed for sleep and strife ;  
Proud, and sore fear made havoc of his pride of life.

## V

Shadows and shapes of fable and storied sooth  
Rose glorious as with gleam of gold unpriced ;  
Eve, clothed with heavenly nakedness and youth  
That matched the morning's ; Cain, self-sacrificed  
On crime's first altar : legends wise as truth,  
And truth in legends deep embalmed and spiced ;  
The stars that saw the starlike eyes of Ruth,  
The grave that heard the clarion call of Christ.  
And higher than sorrow and mirth  
The heavenly song of earth  
Sprang, in such notes as might have well sufficed  
To still the storms of time  
And sin's contentious clime  
With peace renewed of life repara'dised :  
Earth, scarred not yet with temporal scars ;  
Goddess of gods, our mother, chosen among the  
stars.

## VI

Earth fair as heaven, ere change and time set odds  
Between them, light and darkness know not when,  
And fear, grown strong through panic periods,  
Crouched, a crowned worm, in faith's Lernean fen,  
And love lay bound, and hope was scourged with  
rods,  
And death cried out from desert and from den,  
Seeing all the heaven above him dark with gods  
And all the world about him marred of men.  
Cities that nought might purge  
Save the sea's whelming surge  
From all the pent pollutions in their pen  
Deep death drank down, and wrought,  
With wreck of all things, nought,  
That none might live of all their names again,  
Nor aught of all whose life is breath  
Serve any God whose likeness was not like to death.

## VII

Till by the lips and eyes of one live nation  
The blind mute world found grace to see and  
speak,  
And light watched rise a more divine creation  
At that more godlike utterance of the Greek,  
Let there be freedom. Kings whose orient station  
Made pale the morn, and all her presage bleak,  
Girt each with strengths of all his generation,  
Dim tribes of shamefaced soul and sun-swart cheek,  
Twice, urged with one desire,  
Son following hard on sire,  
With all the wrath of all a world to wreak,

And all the rage of night  
Afire against the light  
Whose weakness makes her strong-winged empire  
weak,  
Stood up to unsay that saying, and fell  
Too far for song, though song were thousand-tongued,  
to tell.

## VIII

From those deep echoes of the loud Ægean  
That rolled response whereat false fear was chid  
By songs of joy sublime and Sophoclean,  
Fresh notes reverberate westward rose to bid  
All wearier times take comfort from the pæan  
That tells the night what deeds the sunrise did,  
Even till the lawns and torrents Pyrenean  
Ring answer from the records of the Cid.  
But never force of fountains  
From sunniest hearts of mountains  
Wherein the soul of hidden June was hid  
Poured forth so pure and strong  
Springs of reiterate song,  
Loud as the streams his fame was reared amid,  
More sweet than flowers they feed, and fair  
With grace of lordlier sunshine and more lambent  
air.

## IX

A star more prosperous than the storm-clothed east's  
Clothed all the warm south-west with light like  
spring's,  
When hands of strong men spread the wolves their  
feasts  
And from snake-spirited princes plucked the stings;



Ere earth, grown all one den of hurtling beasts,  
Had for her sunshine and her watersprings  
The fire of hell that warmed the hearts of priests,  
The wells of blood that slaked the lips of kings.  
The shadow of night made stone  
Stood populous and alone,  
Dense with its dead and loathed of living things  
That draw not life from death,  
And as with hell's own breath  
And clangour of immitigable wings  
Vexed the fair face of Paris, made  
Foul in its murderous imminence of sound and shade.

## X

And all these things were parcels of the vision  
That moved a cloud before his eyes, or stood  
A tower half shattered by the strong collision  
Of spirit and spirit, of evil gods with good ;  
A ruinous wall rent through with grim division,  
Where time had marked his every monstrous mood  
Of scorn and strength and pride and self-derision :  
The Tower of Things, that felt upon it brood  
Night, and about it cast  
The storm of all the past  
Now mute and forceless as a fire subdued :  
Yet through the rifted years  
And centuries veiled with tears  
And ages as with very death imbrued  
Freedom, whence hope and faith grow strong,  
Smiles, and firm love sustains the indissoluble song.



## XI

Above the cloudy coil of days deceased,  
Its might of flight, with mists and storms beset,  
Burns heavenward, as with heart and hope increased,  
For all the change of tempests, all the fret  
Of frost or fire, keen fraud or force released,  
Wherewith the world once wasted knows not yet  
If evil or good lit all the darkling east  
From the ardent moon of sovereign Mahomet.  
Sublime in work and will  
The song sublimer still  
Salutes him, ere the splendour shrink and set ;  
Then with imperious eye  
And wing that sounds the sky  
Soars and sees risen as ghosts in concourse met  
The old world's seven elder wonders, firm  
As dust and fixed as shadows, weaker than the worm.

## XII

High witness borne of knights high-souled and hoary  
Before death's face and empire's rings and glows  
Even from the dust their life poured forth left gory,  
As the eagle's cry rings after from the snows  
Supreme rebuke of shame clothed round with glory  
And hosts whose track the false crowned eagle  
shows ;  
More loud than sounds through stormiest song and  
story  
The laugh of slayers whose names the sea-wind  
knows ;  
More loud than peals on land  
In many a red wet hand  
The clash of gold and cymbals as they close ;

Loud as the blast that meets  
 The might of marshalled fleets  
 And sheds it into shipwreck, like a rose  
 Blown from a child's light grasp in sign  
 That earth's high lords are lords not over breeze and  
 brine.

## XIII

Above the dust and mire of man's dejection  
 The wide-winged spirit of song resurgent sees  
 His wingless and long-labouring resurrection  
 Up the arduous heaven, by sore and strange degrees,  
 Mount, and with splendour of the soul's reflection  
 Strike heaven's dark sovereign down upon his  
 knees,  
 Pale in the light of orient insurrection,  
 And dumb before the almighty lord's decrees  
 Who bade him be of yore,  
 Who bids him be no more :  
 And all earth's heart is quickened as the sea's,  
 Even as when sunrise burns  
 The very sea's heart yearns  
 That heard not on the midnight-walking breeze  
 The wail that woke with evensong  
 From hearts of poor folk watching all the darkness  
 long.

## XIV

Dawn and the beams of sunbright song illume  
 Love, with strange children at her piteous breast,  
 By grace of weakness from the grave-mouthed gloom  
 Plucked, and by mercy lulled to living rest,  
 Soft as the nursling's nigh the grandsire's tomb  
 That fell on sleep, a bird of rifled nest ;

Soft as the lips whose smile unsaid the doom  
That gave their sire to violent death's arrest.  
Even for such love's sake strong,  
Wrath fires the inveterate song  
That bids hell gape for one whose bland mouth  
blest  
All slayers and liars that sighed  
Prayer as they slew and lied  
Till blood had clothed his priesthood as a vest,  
And hears, though darkness yet be dumb,  
The silence of the trumpet of the wrath to come.

## XV

Nor lacked these lights of constellated age  
A star among them fed with life more dire,  
Lit with his bloodred fame, whose withering rage  
Made earth for heaven's sake one funereal pyre  
And life in faith's name one appointed stage  
For death to purge the souls of men with fire.  
Heaven, earth, and hell on one thrice tragic page  
Mixed all their light and darkness : one man's lyre  
Gave all their echoes voice ;  
Bade rose-cheeked love rejoice,  
And cold-lipped craft with ravenous fear conspire,  
And fire-eyed faith smite hope  
Dead, seeing enthroned as Pope  
And crowned of heaven on earth at hell's desire  
Sin, called by death's incestuous name  
Borgia : the world that heard it flushed and quailed  
with shame.

## XVI

Another year, and hope triumphant heard  
The consummating sound of song that spake  
Conclusion to the multitudinous word  
Whose expectation held her spirit awake  
Till full delight for twice twelve years deferred  
Bade all souls entering eat and drink, and take  
A third time comfort given them, that the third  
Might heap the measure up of twain, and make  
The sinking year sublime  
Among all sons of time  
And fair in all men's memories for his sake.  
Each thought of ours became  
Fire, kindling from his flame,  
And music widening in his wide song's wake.  
Yea, and the world bore witness here  
How great a light was risen upon this darkening year.

## XVII

It was the dawn of winter : sword in sheath,  
Change, veiled and mild, came down the gradual air  
With cold slow smiles that hid the doom beneath.  
Five days to die in yet were autumn's, ere  
The last leaf withered from his flowerless wreath.  
South, east, and north, our skies were all blown bare,  
But westward over glimmering holt and heath  
Cloud, wind, and light had made a heaven more  
fair  
Than ever dream or truth  
Showed earth in time's keen youth  
When men with angels communed unaware.

Above the sun's head, now  
Veiled even to the ardent brow,  
Rose two sheer wings of sundering cloud, that were  
As a bird's poised for vehement flight,  
Full-fledged with plumes of tawny fire and hoar grey  
light.

## XVIII

As midnight black, as twilight brown, they spread,  
But feathered thick with flame that streaked and  
lined  
Their living darkness, ominous else of dread,  
From south to northmost verge of heaven inclined  
Most like some giant angel's, whose bent head  
Bowed earthward, as with message for mankind  
Of doom or benediction to be shed  
From passage of his presence. Far behind,  
Even while they seemed to close,  
Stoop, and take flight, arose  
Above them, higher than heavenliest thought may  
find  
In light or night supreme  
Of vision or of dream,  
Immeasurable of men's eyes or mounting mind,  
Heaven, manifest in manifold  
Light of pure pallid amber, cheered with fire of gold.

## XIX

And where the fine gold faded all the sky  
Shone green as the outer sea when April glows,  
Inlaid with flakes and feathers fledged to fly  
Of clouds suspense in rapture and repose,  
With large live petals, broad as love bids lie  
Full open when the sun salutes the rose,

And small rent sprays wherewith the heavens most  
high  
Were strewn as autumn strews the garden-close  
With ruinous roseleaves whirled  
About their wan chill world,  
Through wind-worn bowers that now no music  
knows,  
Spoil of the dim dusk year  
Whose utter night is near,  
And near the flower of dawn beyond it blows ;  
Till east and west were fire and light,  
As though the dawn to come had flushed the coming  
night.

## XX

The highways paced of men that toil or play,  
The byways known of none but lonely feet,  
Were paven of purple woven of night and day  
With hands that met as hands of friends might  
meet—  
As though night's were not lifted up to slay  
And day's had waxed not weaker. Peace more  
sweet  
Than music, light more soft than shadow, lay  
On downs and moorlands wan with day's defeat,  
That watched afar above  
Life's very rose of love  
Let all its lustrous leaves fall, fade, and fleet,  
And fill all heaven and earth  
Full as with fires of birth  
Whence time should feed his years with light and  
heat :  
Nay, not life's, but a flower more strong  
Than life or time or death, love's very rose of song.



## XXI

Song visible, whence all men's eyes were lit  
With love and loving wonder : song that glowed  
Through cloud and change on souls that knew not it  
And hearts that wist not whence their comfort  
    flowed,  
Whence fear was lightened of her fever-fit,  
Whence anguish of her life-compelling load.  
Yea, no man's head whereon the fire alit,  
Of all that passed along that sunset road  
    Westward, no brow so drear,  
    No eye so dull of cheer,  
No face so mean whereon that light abode,  
    But as with alien pride  
    Strange godhead glorified  
Each feature flushed from heaven with fire that  
    showed  
The likeness of its own life wrought  
By strong transfiguration as of living thought.

## XXII

Nor only clouds of the everlasting sky,  
Nor only men that paced that sunward way  
To the utter bourne of evening, passed not by  
Unblest or unillumined : none might say,  
Of all things visible in the wide world's eye,  
That all too low for all that grace it lay :  
The lowliest lakelets of the moorland nigh,  
The narrowest pools where shallowest wavelets  
    play,  
Were filled from heaven above  
With light like fire of love,

With flames and colours like a dawn in May,  
 As hearts that lowlier live  
 With light of thoughts that give  
 Light from the depth of souls more deep than they  
 Through song's or story's kindling scroll,  
 The splendour of the shadow that reveals the soul.

## XXIII

For, when such light is in the world, we share,  
 All of us, all the rays thereof that shine :  
 Its presence is alive in the unseen air,  
 Its fire within our veins as quickening wine ;  
 A spirit is shed on all men everywhere,  
 Known or not known of all men for divine.  
 Yea, as the sun makes heaven, that light makes fair  
 All souls of ours, all lesser souls than thine,  
 Priest, prophet, seer and sage,  
 Lord of a subject age  
 That bears thy seal upon it for a sign ;  
 Whose name shall be thy name,  
 Whose light thy light of fame,  
 The light of love that makes thy soul a shrine  
 Whose record through all years to be  
 Shall bear this witness written—that its womb bare  
 thee.

## XXIV

O mystery, whence to one man's hand was given  
 Power upon all things of the spirit, and might  
 Whereby the veil of all the years was riven  
 And naked stood the secret soul of night !  
 O marvel, hailed of eyes whence cloud is driven,  
 That shows at last wrong reconciled with right



By death divine of evil and sin forgiven !  
O light of song, whose fire is perfect light !  
No speech, no voice, no thought,  
No love, avails us aught  
For service of thanksgiving in his sight  
Who hath given us all for ever  
Such gifts that man gave never  
So many and great since first Time's wings took  
flight.  
Man may not praise a spirit above  
Man's : life and death shall praise him : we can only  
love.

## XXV

Life, everlasting while the worlds endure,  
Death, self-abased before a power more high,  
Shall bear one witness, and their word stand sure,  
That not till time be dead shall this man die.  
Love, like a bird, comes loyal to his lure ;  
Fame flies before him, wingless else to fly.  
A child's heart toward his kind is not more pure,  
An eagle's toward the sun no lordlier eye.  
Awe sweet as love and proud  
As fame, though hushed and bowed,  
Yearns toward him silent as his face goes by :  
All crowns before his crown  
Triumphantly bow down,  
For pride that one more great than all draws nigh  
All souls applaud, all hearts acclaim,  
One heart benign, one soul supreme, one conquering  
name.

## NOTES

- ST. V.
- V. 3. La Légende des Siècles : Le Sacre de la Femme.  
 4. La Conscience.  
 7. Booz endormi.  
 8. Première rencontre du Christ avec le tombeau.  
 9. La Terre : Hymne.
- VI. 3. Les Temps Paniques.  
 9. La Ville Disparue.
- VII. Les Trois Cents.
- VIII. 1. Le Déroit de l'Europe : La Chanson de Sophocle à Salamine.  
 7. Le Romancero du Cid.
- IX. 3. Le Petit Roi de Galice.  
 5. Le Jour des Rois.  
 9. Montfaucon.
- X. La vision d'où est sorti ce livre.
- XI. 9. L'an neuf de l'Hégire.  
 12. Les sept merveilles du monde.
- XII. 1. Les quatre jours d'Elciis.  
 4. Le Régiment du baron Madruce.  
 7. La Chanson des Aventuriers de la Mer.  
 9. Les Reîtres.  
 12. La Rose de l'Infante.
- XIII. 1. Le Satyre.  
 12. Les paysans au bord de la mer.
- XIV. 1. Les pauvres gens  
 5. Petit Paul.  
 7. Guerre Civile.  
 9. La Vision de Dante.  
 15. La Trompette du Jugement.
- XV. Torquemada (1882).
- XVI. La Légende des Siècles : tome cinquième et dernier (1883).
- XVII. November 25, 1883.

LINES ON THE MONUMENT OF  
GIUSEPPE MAZZINI.

ITALIA, mother of the souls of men,  
    Mother divine,  
Of all that served thee best with sword or pen,  
    All sons of thine,

Thou knowest that here the likeness of the best  
    Before thee stands ;  
The head most high, the heart found faithfullest,  
    The purest hands.

Above the fume and foam of time that flits,  
    The soul, we know,  
Now sits on high where Alighieri sits  
    With Angelo.

Not his own heavenly tongue hath heavenly speech  
    Enough to say  
What this man was, whose praise no thought may  
    reach,  
    No words can weigh.

Since man's first mother brought to mortal birth  
    Her first-born son,  
Such grace befell not ever man on earth  
    As crowns this one.

Of God nor man was ever this thing said,  
That he could give  
Life back to her who gave him, whence his dead  
Mother might live.

But this man found his mother dead and slain,  
With fast sealed eyes,  
And bade the dead rise up and live again,  
And she did rise.

And all the world was bright with her through  
him :  
But dark with strife,  
Like heaven's own sun that storming clouds bedim,  
Was all his life.

Life and the clouds are vanished : hate and fear  
Have had their span  
Of time to hurt, and are not : he is here,  
The sunlike man.

City superb that hadst Columbus first  
For sovereign son,  
Be prouder that thy breast hath later nurst  
This mightier one.

Glory be his for ever, while his land  
Lives and is free,  
As with controlling breath and sovereign hand  
He bade her be.

Earth shows to heaven the names by thousands told  
That crown her fame,  
But highest of all that heaven and earth behold  
Mazzini's name.

## LES CASQUETS.

FROM the depths of the waters that lighten and darken  
 With change everlasting of life and of death,  
 Where hardly by noon if the lulled ear hearken  
 It hears the sea's as a tired child's breath,  
 Where hardly by night if an eye dare scan it  
 The storm lets shipwreck be seen or heard,  
 As the reefs to the waves and the foam to the granite  
 Respond one merciless word,

Sheer seen and far, in the sea's live heaven,  
 A seamew's flight from the wild sweet land,  
 White-plumed with foam if the wind wake, seven  
 Black helms as of warriors that stir not stand.  
 From the depths that abide and the waves that environ  
 Seven rocks rear heads that the midnight masks ;  
 And the strokes of the swords of the storm are as iron  
 On the steel of the wave-worn casques.

Be night's dark word as the word of a wizard,  
 Be the word of dawn as a god's glad word,  
 Like heads of the spirits of darkness visored  
 That see not for ever, nor ever have heard,  
 These basnets, plumed as for fight or plumeless,  
 Crowned of the storm and by storm discrowned,  
 Keep ward of the lists where the dead lie tombless  
 And the tale of them is not found.

Nor eye may number nor hand may reckon  
The tithes that are taken of life by the dark,  
Or the ways of the path, if doom's hand beckon,  
For the soul to fare as a helmless bark—  
Fare forth on a way that no sign showeth,  
Nor aught of its goal or of aught between  
A path for her flight which no fowl knoweth,  
Which the vulture's eye hath not seen.

Here still, though the wave and the wind seem  
lovers  
Lulled half asleep by their own soft words,  
A dream as of death in the sun's light hovers,  
And a sign in the motions and cries of the birds.  
Dark auguries and keen from the sweet sea-swallows  
Strike noon with a sense as of midnight's breath,  
And the wing that flees and the wing that follows  
Are as types of the wings of death.

For here, when the night roars round, and under  
The white sea lightens and leaps like fire,  
Acclaimed of storm and applauded in thunder,  
Sits death on the throne of his crowned desire.  
Yea, hardly the hand of the god might fashion  
A seat more strong for his strength to take,  
For the might of his heart and the pride of his  
passion  
To rejoice in the wars they make.

When the heart in him brightens with blitheness of  
battle  
And the depth of its thirst is fulfilled with strife,  
And his ear with the ravage of bolts that rattle,  
And the soul of death with the pride of life,



Till the darkness is loud with his dark thanksgiving  
And wind and cloud are as chords of his hymn,  
There is nought save death in the deep night living,  
And the whole night worships him.

Heaven's height bows down to him, signed with his  
token,

And the sea's depth, moved as a heart that yearns,  
Heaves up to him, strong as a heart half broken,

A heart that breaks in a prayer that burns.

Of cloud is the shrine of his worship moulded,

But the altar therein is of sea-shaped stone,  
Whereon, with the strength of his wide wings folded,  
Sits death in the dark, alone.

He hears the word of his servant spoken,

The word that the wind his servant saith ;

Storm writes on the front of the night his token,

That the skies may seem to bow down to death.

But the clouds that stoop and the storms that minister

Serve but as thralls that fulfil their tasks ;

And his seal is not set save here on the sinister

Crests reared of the crownless casques.

Nor flame nor plume of the storm that crowned them

Gilds or quickens their stark black strength.

Life lightens and murmurs and laughs right round  
them,

At peace with the noon's whole breadth and length,

At one with the heart of the soft-souled heaven,

At one with the life of the kind wild land :

But its touch may unbrace not the strengths of the  
seven

Casques hewn of the storm-wind's hand.

No touch may loosen the black braced helmlets  
For the wild elves' heads of the wild waves  
wrought.

As flowers on the sea are her small green realmlets,  
Like heavens made out of a child's heart's thought ;  
But these as thorns of her desolate places,  
Strong fangs that fasten and hold lives fast :  
And the vizors are framed as for formless faces  
That a dark dream sees go past.

Of fear and of fate are the frontlets fashioned,  
And the heads behind them are dire and dumb.  
When the heart of the darkness is scarce impassioned,  
Thrilled scarce with sense of the wrath to come,  
They bear the sign from of old engraven,  
Though peace be round them and strife seem far,  
That here is none but the night-wind's haven,  
With death for the harbour bar.

Of the iron of doom are the casquets carven,  
That never the rivets thereof should burst.  
When the heart of the darkness is hunger-starven,  
And the throats of the gulfs are agape for thirst,  
And stars are as flowers that the wind bids wither,  
And dawn is as hope struck dead by fear,  
The rage of the ravenous night sets hither,  
And the crown of her work is here.

All shores about and afar lie lonely,  
But lonelier are these than the heart of grief,  
These loose-linked rivets of rock, whence only  
Strange life scarce gleams from the sheer main reef,



With a blind wan face in the wild wan morning,  
With a live lit flame on its brows by night,  
That the lost may lose not its word's mute warning  
And the blind by its grace have sight.

Here, walled in with the wide waste water,  
Grew the grace of a girl's lone life,  
The sea's and the sea-wind's foster-daughter,  
And peace was hers in the main mid strife.  
For her were the rocks clothed round with thunder,  
And the crests of them carved by the storm-smith's  
craft :  
For her was the mid storm rent in sunder  
As with passion that wailed and laughed.

For her the sunrise kindled and scattered  
The red rose-leaflets of countless cloud :  
For her the blasts of the springtide shattered  
The strengths reluctant of waves back-bowed.  
For her would winds in the mid sky levy  
Bright wars that hardly the night bade cease :  
At noon, when sleep on the sea lies heavy,  
For her would the sun make peace.

Peace rose crowned with the dawn on golden  
Lit leagues of triumph that flamed and smiled :  
Peace lay lulled in the moon-beholden  
Warm darkness making the world's heart mild  
For all the wide waves' troubles and treasons,  
One word only her soul's ear heard  
Speak from stormless and storm-rent seasons,  
And nought save peace was the word.

All her life waxed large with the light of it,  
All her heart fed full on the sound :  
Spirit and sense were exalted in sight of it,  
Compassed and girdled and clothed with it round  
Sense was none but a strong still rapture,  
Spirit was none but a joy sublime,  
Of strength to curb and of craft to capture  
The craft and the strength of Time.

Time lay bound as in painless prison  
There, closed in with a strait small space.  
Never thereon as a strange light risen  
Change had unveiled for her grief's far face.  
Three white walls flung out from the basement  
Girt the width of the world whereon  
Gazing at night from her flame-lit casement  
She saw where the dark sea shone.

Hardly the breadth of a few brief paces,  
Hardly the length of a strong man's stride,  
The small court flower-lit with children's faces  
Scarce held scope for a bird to hide.  
Yet here was a man's brood reared and hidden  
Between the rocks and the towers and the foam,  
Where peril and pity and peace were bidden  
As guests to the same sure home.

Here would pity keep watch for peril,  
And surety comfort his heart with peace.  
No flower save one, where the reefs lie sterile,  
Gave of the seed of its heart's increase.

Pity and surety and peace most lowly  
Were the root and the stem and the bloom of the  
flower :  
And the light and the breath of the buds kept holy  
That maid's else blossomless bower.

With never a leaf but the seaweed's tangle,  
Never a bird's but the seamew's note,  
It heard all round it the strong storms wrangle,  
Watched far past it the waste wrecks float.  
But her soul was stilled by the sky's endurance,  
And her heart made glad with the sea's content ;  
And he: faith waxed more in the sun's assurance  
For the winds that came and went.

Sweetness was brought for her forth of the bitter  
Sea's strength, and light of the deep sea's dark,  
From where green lawns on Alderney glitter  
To the bastioned crags of the steeps of Sark.  
These she knew from afar beholden,  
And marvelled haply what life would be  
On moors that sunset and dawn leave golden,  
In dells that smile on the sea.

And forth she fared as a stout-souled rover,  
For a brief blithe raid on the bounding brine :  
And light winds ferried her light bark over  
To the lone soft island of fair-limbed kine.  
But the league-long length of its wild green border,  
And the small bright streets of serene St. Anne,  
Perplexed her sense with a strange disorder  
At sight of the works of man.

The world was here, and the world's confusion,  
And the dust of the wheels of revolving life,  
Pain, labour, change, and the fierce illusion  
Of strife more vain than the sea's old strife.  
And her heart within her was vexed, and dizzy  
The sense of her soul as a wheel that whirled :  
She might not endure for a space that busy  
Loud coil of the troublous world.

Too full, she said, was the world of trouble,  
Too dense with noise of contentious things,  
And shows less bright than the blithe foam's bubble  
As home she fared on the smooth wind's wings.  
For joy grows loftier in air more lonely,  
Where only the sea's brood fain would be ;  
Where only the heart may receive in it only  
The love of the heart of the sea.

## A BALLAD OF SARK.

HIGH beyond the granite portal arched across  
 Like the gateway of some godlike giant's hold  
 Sweep and swell the billowy breasts of moor and moss  
 East and westward, and the dell their slopes enfold  
 Basks in purple, glows in green, exults in gold.  
 Glens that know the dove and fells that hear the lark  
 Fill with joy the rapturous island, as an ark  
 Full of spicery wrought from herb and flower and  
 tree.  
 None would dream that grief even here may disembark  
 On the wrathful woful marge of earth and sea.

Rocks emblazoned like the mid shield's royal boss  
 Take the sun with all their blossom broad and  
 bold.  
 None would dream that all this moorland's glow and  
 gloss  
 Could be dark as tombs that strike the spirit acold  
 Even in eyes that opened here, and here behold  
 Now no sun relume from hope's belated spark  
 Any comfort, nor may ears of mourners hark  
 Though the ripe woods ring with golden-throated  
 glee,  
 While the soul lies shattered, like a stranded bark  
 On the wrathful woful marge of earth and sea.

Death and doom are they whose crested triumphs  
toss

On the proud plumed waves whence mourning  
notes are tolled.

Wail of perfect woe and moan for utter loss

Raise the bride-song through the graveyard on the  
wold

Where the bride-bed keeps the bridegroom fast in  
mould,

Where the bride, with death for priest and doom for  
clerk,

Hears for choir the throats of waves like wolves that  
bark,

Sore anhungered, off the drear Eperquerie,

Fain to spoil the strongholds of the strength of Sark

On the wrathful woful marge of earth and sea.

Prince of storm and tempest, lord whose ways are  
dark,

Wind whose wings are spread for flight that none  
may mark,

Lightly dies the joy that lives by grace of thee.

Love through thee lies bleeding, hope lies cold and  
stark,

On the wrathful woful marge of earth and sea.



## NINE YEARS OLD

FEBRUARY 4, 1883

## I

LORD of light, whose shrine no hands destroy,  
 God of song, whose hymn no tongue refuses,  
 Now, though spring far hence be cold and coy,  
 Bid the golden mouths of all the Muses  
 Ring forth gold of strains without alloy,  
 Till the ninefold rapture that suffuses  
 Heaven with song bid earth exult for joy,  
 Since the child whose head this dawn bedews is  
 Sweet as once thy violet-cradled boy.

## II

Even as he lay lapped about with flowers,  
 Lies the life now nine years old before us  
 Lapped about with love in all its hours ;  
 Hailed of many loves that chant in chorus  
 Loud or low from lush or leafless bowers,  
 Some from hearts exultant born sonorous,  
 Some scarce louder-voiced than soft-tongued  
 showers  
 Two months hence, when spring's light wings  
 poised o'er us  
 High shall hover, and her heart be ours.

## III

Even as he, though man-forsaken, smiled  
On the soft kind snakes divinely bidden  
There to feed him in the green mid wild  
Full with hurtless honey, till the hidden  
Birth should prosper, finding fate more mild,  
So full-fed with pleasures unforbidden,  
So by love's lures blamelessly beguiled,  
Laughs the nursling of our hearts unhidden  
Yet by change that mars not yet the child.

## IV

Ah, not yet ! Thou, lord of night and day,  
Time, sweet father of such blameless pleasure,  
Time, false friend who tak'st thy gifts away,  
Spare us yet some scantlings of the treasure,  
Leave us yet some rapture of delay,  
Yet some bliss of blind and fearless leisure  
Unprophetic of delight's decay,  
Yet some nights and days wherein to measure  
All the joys that bless us while they may.

## V

Not the waste Arcadian woodland, wet  
Still with dawn and vocal with Alpheus,  
Reared a nursling worthier love's regret,  
Lord, than this, whose eyes beholden free us  
Straight from bonds the soul would fain forget,  
Fain cast off, that night and day might see us  
Clear once more of life's vain fume and fret :  
Leave us, then, whate'er thy doom decree us,  
Yet some days wherein to love him yet.



## VI

Yet some days wherein the child is ours,  
Ours, not thine, O lord whose hand is o'er us  
Always, as the sky with suns and showers  
Dense and radiant, soundless or sonorous ;  
Yet some days for love's sake, ere the bowers  
Fade wherein his fair first years kept chorus  
Night and day with Graces robed like hours,  
Ere this worshipped childhood wane before us,  
Change, and bring forth fruit—but no more flowers.

## VII

Love we may the thing that is to be,  
Love we must : but how forego this olden  
Joy, this flower of childish love, that we  
Held more dear than aught of Time is holden—  
Time, whose laugh is like as Death's to see—  
Time, who heeds not aught of all beholden,  
Heard, or touched in passing—flower or tree,  
Tares or grain of leaden days or golden—  
More than wind has heed of ships at sea ?

## VIII

First the babe, a very rose of joy,  
Sweet as hope's first note of jubilation,  
Passes : then must growth and change destroy  
Next the child, and mar the consecration  
Hallowing yet, ere thought or sense annoy,  
Childhood's yet half heavenlike habitation,  
Bright as truth and frailer than a toy ;  
Whence its guest with eager gratulation  
Springs, and life grows larger round the boy.

## IX

Yet, ere sunrise wholly cease to shine,  
Ere change come to chide our hearts, and scatter  
Memories marked for love's sake with a sign,  
Let the light of dawn beholden flatter  
Yet some while our eyes that feed on thine,  
Child, with love that change nor time can shatter,  
Love, whose silent song says more than mine  
Now, though charged with elder loves and latter  
Here it hails a lord whose years are nine.

## AFTER A READING

FOR the seven times seventh time love would renew  
 the delight without end or alloy  
 That it takes in the praise as it takes in the presence  
 of eyes that fulfil it with joy ;  
 But how shall it praise them and rest unrebuked by  
 the presence and pride of the boy ?

Praise meet for a child is unmeet for an elder whose  
 winters and springs are nine :  
 What song may have strength in its wings to expand  
 them, or light in its eyes to shine,  
 That shall seem not as weakness and darkness if  
 matched with the theme I would fain make mine ?

The round little flower of a face that exults in the  
 sunshine of shadowless days  
 Defies the delight it enkindles to sing of it aught not  
 unfit for the praise  
 Of the sweetest of all things that eyes may rejoice in  
 and tremble with love as they gaze.

Such tricks and such meanings abound on the lips  
 and the brows that are brighter than light,  
 The demure little chin, the sedate little nose, and the  
 forehead of sun-stained white,  
 That love overflows into laughter and laughter sub-  
 sides into love at the sight.

Each limb and each feature has action in tune with  
the meaning that smiles as it speaks  
From the fervour of eyes and the fluttering of hands  
in a foretaste of fancies and freaks,  
When the thought of them deepens the dimples that  
laugh in the corners and curves of his cheeks.

As a bird when the music within her is yet too intense  
to be spoken in song,  
That pauses a little for pleasure to feel how the notes  
from withinwards throng,  
So pauses the laugh at his lips for a little, and waxes  
within more strong.

As the music elate and triumphal that bids all things  
of the dawn bear part  
With the tune that prevails when her passion has  
risen into rapture of passionate art,  
So lightens the laughter made perfect that leaps from  
its nest in the heaven of his heart.

Deep, grave and sedate is the gaze of expectant  
intensity bent for awhile  
And absorbed on its aim as the tale that enthralls him  
uncovers the web of its wile,  
Till the goal of attention is touched, and expectancy  
kisses delight in a smile.

And it seems to us here that in Paradise hardly the  
spirit of Lamb or of Blake  
May hear or behold aught sweeter than lightens and  
rings when his bright thoughts break  
In laughter that well might lure them to look, and to  
smile as of old for his sake.

O singers that best loved children, and best for their  
sakes are beloved of us here,  
In the world of your life everlasting, where love has  
no thorn and desire has no fear,  
All else may be sweeter than aught is on earth,  
nought dearer than these are dear.

## MAYTIME IN MIDWINTER

A NEW year gleams on us, tearful  
 And troubled and smiling dim  
 As the smile on a lip still fearful,  
 As glances of eyes that swim :  
 But the bird of my heart makes cheerful  
 The days that are bright for him.

Child, how may a man's love merit  
 The grace you shed as you stand,  
 The gift that is yours to inherit ?  
 Through you are the bleak days bland ;  
 Your voice is a light to my spirit ;  
 You bring the sun in your hand.

The year's wing shows not a feather  
 As yet of the plumes to be ;  
 Yet here in the shrill grey weather  
 The spring's self stands at my knee,  
 And laughs as we commune together,  
 And lightens the world we see.

The rains are as dews for the christening  
 Of dawns that the nights benumb :  
 The spring's voice answers me listening  
 For speech of a child to come,  
 While promise of music is glistening  
 On lips that delight keeps dumb.



The mists and the storms receding  
At sight of you smile and die :  
Your eyes held wide on me reading  
Shed summer across the sky :  
Your heart shines clear for me, heeding  
No more of the world than I.

The world, what is it to you, dear,  
And me, if its face be grey,  
And the new-born year be a shrewd year  
For flowers that the fierce winds fray?  
You smile, and the sky seems blue, dear ;  
You laugh, and the month turns May.

Love cares not for care, he has daffed her  
Aside as a mate for guile :  
The sight that my soul yearns after  
Feeds full my sense for awhile ;  
Your sweet little sun-faced laughter,  
Your good little glad grave smile.

Your hands through the bookshelves flutter ;  
Scott, Shakespeare, Dickens, are caught ;  
Blake's visions, that lighten and mutter ;  
Molière—and his smile has nought  
Left on it of sorrow, to utter  
The secret things of his thought.

No grim thing written or graven  
But grows, if you gaze on it, bright ;  
A lark's note rings from the raven,  
And tragedy's robe turns white ;  
And shipwrecks drift into haven ;  
And darkness laughs, and is light.



Grief seems but a vision of madness ;  
Life's key-note peals from above  
With nought in it more of sadness  
Than broods on the heart of a dove :  
At sight of you, thought grows gladness,  
And life, through love of you, love.

## A DOUBLE BALLAD OF AUGUST

(1884)

ALL Afric, winged with death and fire,  
 Pants in our pleasant English air.  
 Each blade of grass is tense as wire,  
 And all the wood's loose trembling hair  
 Stark in the broad and breathless glare  
 Of hours whose touch wastes herb and tree.  
 This bright sharp death shines everywhere ;  
 Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

Earth seems a corpse upon the pyre ;  
 The sun, a scourge for slaves to bear.  
 All power to fear, all keen desire,  
 Lies dead as dreams of days that were  
 Before the new-born world lay bare  
 In heaven's wide eye, whereunder we  
 Lie breathless till the season spare :  
 Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

Fierce hours, with ravening fangs that tire  
 On spirit and sense, divide and share  
 The throbs of thoughts that scarce respire,  
 The throes of dreams that scarce forbear

68     A DOUBLE BALLAD OF AUGUST

One mute immitigable prayer  
For cold perpetual sleep to be  
Shed snowlike on the sense of care.  
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

The dust of ways where men suspire  
Seems even the dust of death's dim lair.  
But though the feverish days be dire  
The sea-wind rears and cheers its fair  
Blithe broods of babes that here and there  
Make the sands laugh and glow for glee  
With gladder flowers than gardens wear.  
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

The music dies not off the lyre  
That lets no soul alive despair.  
Sleep strikes not dumb the breathless choir  
Of waves whose note bids sorrow spare.  
As glad they sound, as fast they fare,  
As when fate's word first set them free  
And gave them light and night to wear.  
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

For there, though night and day conspire  
To compass round with toil and snare  
And changeless whirl of change, whose gyre  
Draws all things deathwards unaware,  
The spirit of life they scourge and scare,  
Wild waves that follow on waves that flee  
Laugh, knowing that yet, though earth despair,  
Life yearns for solace toward the sea.

## HEARTSEASE COUNTRY

TO ISABEL SWINBURNE

THE far green westward heavens are bland,  
 The far green Wiltshire downs are clear  
 As these deep meadows hard at hand :  
 The sight knows hardly far from near,  
 Nor morning joy from evening cheer.  
 In cottage garden-plots their bees  
 Find many a fervent flower to seize  
 And strain and drain the heart away  
 From ripe sweet-williams and sweet-peas  
 At every turn on every way.

But gladliest seems one flower to expand  
 Its whole sweet heart all round us here ;  
 'Tis Heartsease Country, Pansy Land.  
 Nor sounds nor savours harsh and drear  
 Where engines yell and halt and veer  
 Can vex the sense of him who sees  
 One flower-plot midway, that for trees  
 Has poles, and sheds all grimed or grey  
 For bowers like those that take the breeze  
 At every turn on every way.

Content even there they smile and stand,  
Sweet thought's heart-easing flowers, nor fear,  
With reek and roaring steam though fanned,  
Nor shrink nor perish as they peer.  
The heart's eye holds not those more dear  
That glow between the lanes and leas  
Where'er the homeliest hand may please  
To bid them blossom as they may  
Where light approves and wind agrees  
At every turn on every way.

Sister, the word of winds and seas  
Endures not as the word of these  
Your wayside flowers whose breath would say  
How hearts that love may find heart's ease  
At every turn on every way.

## A BALLAD OF APPEAL

TO CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI

SONG wakes with every wakening year  
 From hearts of birds that only feel  
 Brief spring's deciduous flower-time near :  
 And song more strong to help or heal  
 Shall silence worse than winter seal ?  
 From love-lit thought's remurmuring cave  
 The notes that rippled, wave on wave,  
 Were clear as love, as faith were strong ;  
 And all souls blessed the soul that gave  
 Sweet water from the well of song.

All hearts bore fruit of joy to hear,  
 All eyes felt mist upon them steal  
 For joy's sake, trembling toward a tear,  
 When, loud as marriage-bells that peal,  
 Or flutelike soft, or keen like steel,  
 Sprang the sheer music ; sharp or grave,  
 We heard the drift of winds that drive,  
 And saw, swept round by ghosts in throng,  
 Dark rocks, that yielded, where they clave,  
 Sweet water from the well of song.

Blithe verse made all the dim sense clear  
That smiles of babbling babes conceal :  
Prayer's perfect heart spake here : and here  
Rose notes of blameless woe and weal,  
More soft than this poor song's appeal.  
Where orchards bask, where cornfields wave,  
They dropped like rains that cleanse and lave,  
And scattered all the year along,  
Like dewfall on an April grave,  
Sweet water from the well of song.

Ballad, go bear our prayer, and crave  
Pardon, because thy lowlier stave  
Can do this plea no right, but wrong.  
Ask nought beside thy pardon, save  
Sweet water from the well of song.



## CRADLE SONGS

(TO A TUNE OF BLAKE'S)

## I

BABY, baby bright,  
Sleep can steal from sight  
Little of your light :

Soft as fire in dew,  
Still the life in you  
Lights your slumber through.

Four white eyelids keep  
Fast the seal of sleep  
Deep as love is deep :

Yet, though closed it lies,  
Love behind them spies  
Heaven in two blue eyes.

## II

Baby, baby dear,  
Earth and heaven are near  
Now, for heaven is here.

## CRADLE SONGS

Heaven is every place  
Where your flower-sweet face  
Fills our eyes with grace.

Till your own eyes deign  
Earth a glance again,  
Earth and heaven are twain.

Now your sleep is done,  
Shine, and show the sun  
Earth and heaven are one.

## III

Baby, baby sweet,  
Love's own lips are meet  
Scarce to kiss your feet.

Hardly love's own ear,  
When your laugh crows clear,  
Quite deserves to hear.

Hardly love's own wile,  
Though it please awhile,  
Quite deserves your smile.

Baby full of grace,  
Bless us yet a space :  
Sleep will come apace.

## IV

Baby, baby true,  
Man, whate'er he do,  
May deceive not you.

Smiles whose love is guile,  
Worn a flattering while,  
Win from you no smile.

One, the smile alone  
Out of love's heart grown,  
Ever wins your own.

Man, a dunce uncouth,  
Errs in age and youth :  
Babies know the truth.

## V

Baby, baby fair,  
Love is fain to dare  
Bless your haughtiest air.

Baby blithe and bland,  
Reach but forth a hand  
None may dare withstand ;

Love, though wellnigh cowed,  
Yet would praise aloud  
Pride so sweetly proud.

No ! the fitting word  
Even from breeze or bird  
Never yet was heard.

## VI

Baby, baby kind,  
Though no word we find,  
Bear us yet in mind.

## CRADLE SONGS

Half a little hour,  
Baby bright in bower,  
Keep this thought aflower—

Love it is, I see,  
Here with heart and knee  
Bows and worships me.

What can baby do,  
Then, for love so true?—  
Let it worship you.

## VII

Baby, baby wise,  
Love's divine surmise  
Lights your constant eyes.

Day and night and day  
One mute word would they,  
As the soul saith, say.

Trouble comes and goes ;  
Wonder ebbs and flows ;  
Love remains and glows.

As the fledgeling dove  
Feels the breast above,  
So your heart feels love.

## PELAGIUS

## I

THE sea shall praise him and the shores bear part  
 That reared him when the bright south world was  
     black  
 With fume of creeds more foul than hell's own  
     rack,  
 Still darkening more love's face with loveless art  
 Since Paul, faith's fervent Antichrist, of heart  
     Heroic, haled the world vehemently back  
 From Christ's pure path on dire Jehovah's track,  
 And said to dark Elisha's Lord, "Thou art."  
 But one whose soul had put the raiment on  
 Of love that Jesus left with James and John  
     Withstood that Lord whose seals of love were  
     lies,  
 Seeing what we see—how, touched by Truth's bright  
     rod,  
 The fiend whom Jews and Africans called God  
     Feels his own hell take hold on him, and dies.

## II

The world has no such flower in any land,  
 And no such pearl in any gulf the sea,  
 As any babe on any mother's knee.  
 But all things blessed of men by saints are banned :

God gives them grace to read and understand  
The palimpsest of evil, writ where we,  
Poor fools and lovers but of love, can see  
Nought save a blessing signed by Love's own hand.  
The smile that opens heaven on us for them  
Hath sin's transmitted birthmark hid therein :  
The kiss it craves calls down from heaven a rod.  
If innocence be sin that Gods condemn,  
Praise we the men who so being born in sin  
First dared the doom and broke the bonds of  
God.

## III

Man's heel is on the Almighty's neck who said,  
Let there be hell, and there was hell—on earth.  
But not for that may men forget their worth—  
Nay, but much more remember them—who led  
The living first from dwellings of the dead,  
And rent the cerecloths that were wont to engirth  
Souls wrapped and swathed and swaddled from  
their birth  
With lies that bound them fast from heel to head.  
Among the tombs when wise men all their lives  
Dwelt, and cried out, and cut themselves with  
knives,  
These men, being foolish, and of saints abhorred  
Beheld in heaven the sun by saints reviled,  
Love, and on earth one everlasting Lord  
In every likeness of a little child.

## LOUIS BLANC

## THREE SONNETS TO HIS MEMORY

## I

THE stainless soul that smiled through glorious eyes ;  
 The bright grave brow whereon dark fortune's  
 blast

Might blow, but might not bend it, nor o'ercast,  
 Save for one fierce fleet hour of shame, the skies  
 Thrilled with warm dreams of worthier days to rise  
 And end the whole world's winter ; here at last,  
 If death be death, have passed into the past ;  
 If death be life, live, though their semblance dies.  
 Hope and high faith inviolate of distrust  
 Shone strong as life inviolate of the grave  
 Through each bright word and lineament serene.  
 Most loving righteousness and love most just  
 Crowned, as day crowns the dawn-enkindled wave,  
 With visible aureole thine unfaltering mien.

## II

Strong time and fire-swift change, with lightnings  
 clad  
 And shod with thunders of reverberate years,  
 Have filled with light and sound of hopes and fears  
 The space of many a season, since I had



Grace of good hap to make my spirit glad,  
Once communing with thine : and memory hears  
The bright voice yet that then rejoiced mine ears,  
Sees yet the light of eyes that spake, and bade  
Fear not, but hope, though then time's heart were  
weak

And heaven by hell shade-stricken, and the range  
Of high-born hope made questionable and strange  
As twilight trembling till the sunlight speak.

Thou sawest the sunrise and the storm in one  
Break : seest thou now the storm-compelling sun ?

## III

Surely thou seest, O spirit of light and fire,  
Surely thou canst not choose, O soul, but see  
The days whose dayspring was beheld of thee  
Ere eyes less pure might have their hope's desire,  
Beholding life in heaven again respire  
Where men saw nought that was or was to be,  
Save only death imperial. Thou and he  
Who has the heart of all men's hearts for lyre,  
Ye twain, being great of spirit as time is great,  
And sure of sight as truth's own heavenward eye,  
Beheld the forms of forces passing by  
And certitude of equal-balanced fate,  
Whose breath forefelt makes darkness palpitate,  
And knew that light should live and darkness die.

## VOS DEOS LAUDAMUS :

### THE CONSERVATIVE JOURNALIST'S ANTHEM

"As a matter of fact, no man living, or who ever lived—not CÆSAR or PERICLES, not SHAKESPEARE or MICHAEL ANGELO—could confer honour more than he took on entering the House of Lords."—*Saturday Review*, December 15, 1883.

"Clumsy and shallow snobbery—can do no hurt."—*Ibid.*

#### I

O LORDS our Gods, beneficent, sublime,  
 In the evening, and before the morning flames,  
 We praise, we bless, we magnify your names.  
 The slave is he that serves not ; his the crime  
 And shame, who hails not as the crown of Time  
 That House wherein the all-envious world acclaims  
 Such glory that the reflex of it shames  
 All crowns bestowed of men for prose or rhyme.  
 The serf, the cur, the sycophant is he  
 Who feels no cringing motion twitch his knee  
 When from a height too high for Shakespeare nods  
 The wearer of a higher than Milton's crown.  
 Stoop, Chaucer, stoop : Keats, Shelley, Burns, bow  
 down :

These have no part with you, O Lords our Gods.

## II

O Lords our Gods, it is not that ye sit  
Serene above the thunder, and exempt  
From strife of tongues and casualties that tempt  
Men merely found by proof of manhood fit  
For service of their fellows : this is it  
Which sets you past the reach of Time's attempt,  
Which gives us right of justified contempt  
For commonwealths built up by mere men's wit :  
That gold unlocks not, nor may flatteries ope,  
The portals of your heaven ; that none may hope  
With you to watch how life beneath you plods,  
Save for high service given, high duty done ;  
That never was your rank ignobly won :  
For this we give you praise, O Lords our Gods.

## III

O Lords our Gods, the times are evil : you  
Redeem the time, because of evil days.  
While abject souls in servitude of praise  
Bow down to heads untitled, and the crew  
Whose honour dwells but in the deeds they do,  
From loftier hearts your nobler servants raise  
More manful salutation : yours are bays  
That not the dawn's plebeian pearls bedew ;  
Yours, laurels plucked not of such hands as wove  
Old age its chaplet in Colonos' grove.  
Our time, with heaven and with itself at odds,  
Makes all lands else as seas that seethe and boil ;  
But yours are yet the corn and wine and oil,  
And yours our worship yet, O Lords our Gods

*December 15, 1883.*

## ON THE BICENTENARY OF CORNEILLE

CELEBRATED UNDER THE PRESIDENCY OF  
VICTOR HUGO

SCARCE two hundred years are gone, and the world  
is past away

As a noise of brawling wind, as a flash of breaking  
foam,

That beheld the singer born who raised up the  
dead of Rome ;

And a mightier now than he bids him too rise up  
to-day.

All the dim great age is dust, and its king is tombless  
clay,

But its loftier laurel green as in living eyes it  
clomb,

And his memory whom it crowned hath his people's  
heart for home,

And the shade across it falls of a lordlier-flowering  
bay.

Stately shapes about the tomb of their mighty maker  
pace,

Heads of high-plumed Spaniards shine, souls revive  
of Roman race,

Sound of arms and words of wail through the glowing  
darkness rise,

Speech of hearts heroic rings forth of lips that know  
not breath,

And the light of thoughts august fills the pride of  
kindling eyes

Whence of yore the spell of song drove the shadow  
of darkling death.

## IN SEPULCRETIS

“Vidistis ipso rapere de rogo cœnam.”—CATULLUS, LIX. 3.

“To publish even one line of an author which he himself has not intended for the public at large—especially letters which are addressed to private persons—is to commit a despicable act of felony.”—HEINE.

## I

It is not then enough that men who give  
 The best gifts given of man to man should feel,  
 Alive, a snake's head ever at their heel :  
 Small hurt the worms may do them while they live—  
 Such hurt as scorn for scorn's sake may forgive.  
 But now, when death and fame have set one seal  
 On tombs whereat Love, Grief, and Glory kneel,  
 Men sift all secrets, in their critic sieve,  
 Of graves wherein the dust of death might shrink  
 To know what tongues defile the dead man's name  
 With loathsome love, and praise that stings like  
 shame.  
 Rest once was theirs, who had crossed the mortal  
 brink :  
 No rest, no reverence now : dull fools undress  
 Death's holiest shrine, life's veriest nakedness.



## II

A man was born, sang, suffered, loved, and died.  
Men scorned him living : let us praise him dead.  
His life was brief and bitter, gently led  
And proudly, but with pure and blameless pride.  
He wrought no wrong toward any ; satisfied  
With love and labour, whence our souls are fed  
With largesse yet of living wine and bread.  
Come, let us praise him : here is nought to hide.  
Make bare the poor dead secrets of his heart,  
Strip the stark-naked soul, that all may peer,  
Spy, smirk, sniff, snap, snort, snivel, snarl, and  
sneer :  
Let none so sad, let none so sacred part  
Lie still for pity, rest unstirred for shame,  
But all be scanned of all men. This is fame.

## III

“ Now, what a thing it is to be an ass ! ” <sup>1</sup>  
If one, that strutted up the brawling streets  
As foreman of the flock whose concourse greets  
Men’s ears with bray more dissonant than brass,  
Would change from blame to praise as coarse and crass  
His natural note, and learn the fawning feats  
Of lapdogs, who but knows what luck he meets ?  
But all in vain old fable holds her glass.

Mocked and reviled by men of poisonous breath,  
A great man dies : but one thing worst was spared ;  
Not all his heart by their base hands lay bared.

<sup>1</sup> *Titus Andronicus*, Act iv., Scene 2.



One comes to crown with praise the dust of death ;  
And lo, through him this worst is brought to pass.  
Now, what a thing it is to be an ass !

## IV

Shame, such as never yet dealt heavier stroke  
On heads more shameful, fall on theirs through  
whom  
Dead men may keep inviolate not their tomb,  
But all its depths these ravenous grave-worms choke.  
And yet what waste of wrath were this, to invoke  
Shame on the shameless? Even their twin-born  
doom,  
Their native air of life, a carrion fume,  
Their natural breath of love, a noisome smoke,  
The bread they break, the cup whereof they drink,  
The record whose remembrance damns their name,  
Smells, tastes, and sounds of nothing but of shame.  
If thankfulness nor pity bids them think  
What work is this of theirs, and pause betimes,  
Not Shakespeare's grave would scare them off with  
rhymes.

## LOVE AND SCORN

### I

Love, loyallest and lordliest born of things,  
 Immortal that shouldst be, though all else end,  
 In plighted hearts of fearless friend with friend,  
 Whose hand may curb or clip thy plume-plucked  
 wings?

Not grief's nor time's: though these be lords and kings  
 Crowned, and their yoke bid vassal passions bend,  
 They may not pierce the spirit of sense, or blend  
 Quick poison with the soul's live watersprings.  
 The true clear heart whose core is manful trust  
 Fears not that very death may turn to dust

Love lit therein as toward a brother born,  
 If one touch make not all its fine gold rust,  
 If one breath blight not all its glad ripe corn,  
 And all its fire be turned to fire of scorn.

### II

Scorn only, scorn begot of bitter proof  
 By keen experience of a trustless heart,  
 Bears burning in her new-born hand the dart  
 Wherewith love dies heart-stricken, and the roof

Falls of his palace, and the storied woof  
Long woven of many a year with life's whole art  
Is rent like any rotten weed apart,  
And hardly with reluctant eyes aloof  
Cold memory guards one relic scarce exempt  
Yet from the fierce corrosion of contempt,  
And hardly saved by pity. Woe are we  
That once we loved, and love not ; but we know  
The ghost of love, surviving yet in show,  
Where scorn has passed, is vain as grief must be.

## III

O sacred, just, inevitable scorn,  
Strong child of righteous judgment, whom with  
grief  
The rent heart bears, and wins not yet relief,  
Seeing of its pain so dire a portent born,  
Must thou not spare one sheaf of all the corn,  
One doit of all the treasure ? not one sheaf,  
Not one poor doit of all ? not one dead leaf  
Of all that fell and left behind a thorn ?  
Is man so strong that one should scorn another ?  
Is any as God, not made of mortal mother,  
That love should turn in him to gall and flame ?  
Nay : but the true is not the false heart's brother :  
Love cannot love disloyalty : the name  
That else it wears is love no more, but shame.

## ON THE DEATH OF RICHARD DOYLE

A LIGHT of blameless laughter, fancy-bred,  
 Soft-souled and glad and kind as love or sleep,  
 Fades, and sweet mirth's own eyes are fain to weep  
 Because her blithe and gentlest bird is dead.  
 Weep, elves and fairies all, that never shed  
 Tear yet for mortal mourning : you that keep  
 The doors of dreams whence nought of ill may  
     creep,  
 Mourn once for one whose lips your honey fed.  
 Let waters of the Golden River steep  
 The rose-roots whence his grave blooms rosy-red,  
 And murmuring of Hyblæan hives be deep  
 About the summer silence of its bed,  
 And nought less gracious than a violet peep  
 Between the grass grown greener round his head.

## IN MEMORY OF HENRY A. BRIGHT

YET again another, ere his crowning year,  
 Gone from friends that here may look for him no  
 more.

Never now for him shall hope set wide the door,  
 Hope that hailed him hither, fain to greet him here.  
 All the gracious garden-flowers he held so dear,  
 Oldworld English blossoms, all his homestead  
 store,  
 Oldworld grief had strewn them round his bier of  
 yore,

Bidding each drop leaf by leaf as tear by tear ;  
 Rarer lutes than mine had borne more tuneful token,  
 Touched by subtler hands than echoing time can  
 wrong,

Sweet as flowers had strewn his graveward path  
 along.

Now may no such old sweet dirges more be spoken,  
 Now the flowers whose breath was very song are  
 broken,

Nor may sorrow find again so sweet a song.

## A SOLITUDE

SEA beyond sea, sand after sweep of sand,  
Here ivory smooth, here cloven and ridged with flow  
Of channelled waters soft as rain or snow,  
Stretch their lone length at ease beneath the bland  
Grey gleam of skies whose smile on wave and strand  
Shines weary like a man's who smiles to know  
That now no dream can mock his faith with show,  
Nor cloud for him seem living sea or land.

Is there an end at all of all this waste,  
These crumbling cliffs defeatured and defaced,  
These ruinous heights of sea-sapped walls that slide  
Seaward with all their banks of bleak blown flowers  
Glad yet of life, ere yet their hope subside  
Beneath the coil of dull dense waves and hours?

VICTOR HUGO :  
L'ARCHIPEL DE LA MANCHE

SEA and land are fairer now, nor aught is all the same,  
Since a mightier hand than Time's hath woven  
their votive wreath.

Rocks as swords half drawn from out the smooth  
wave's jewelled sheath,

Fields whose flowers a tongue divine hath numbered  
name by name,

Shores whereby the midnight or the noon clothed  
round with flame

Hears the clamour jar and grind which utters from  
beneath

Cries of hungering waves like beasts fast bound  
that gnash their teeth,

All of these the sun that lights them lights not like  
his fame ;

None of these is but the thing it was before he came.

Where the darkling overfalls like dens of torment  
seethe,

High on tameless moorlands, down in meadows  
bland and tame,

Where the garden hides, and where the wind  
uproots the heath,

Glory now henceforth for ever, while the world shall  
be,

Shines, a star that keeps not time with change on  
earth and sea.



## THE TWILIGHT OF THE LORDS

### I

Is the sound a trumpet blown, or a bell for burial  
tolled,

Whence the whole air vibrates now to the clash of  
words like swords—

“Let us break their bonds in sunder, and cast away  
their cords ;

Long enough the world has mocked us, and marvelled  
to behold

How the grown man bears the curb whence his boy-  
hood was controlled ” ?

Nay, but hearken : surer counsel more sober speech  
affords :

“Is the past not all inscribed with the praises of  
our Lords ?

Is the memory dead of deeds done of yore, the love  
grown cold

That should bind our hearts to trust in their counsels  
wise and bold ?

These that stand against you now, senseless crowds  
and heartless hordes,

Are not these the sons of men that withstood your  
kings of old ?

Theirs it is to bind and loose ; theirs the key that  
knows the wards,

Theirs the staff to lead or smite ; yours, the spades and  
ploughs and hods :

Theirs to hear and yours to cry, Power is yours,  
O Lords our Gods."

II

Hear, O England : these are they that would counsel  
thee aright.

Wouldst thou fain have all thy sons sons of thine  
indeed, and free ?

Nay, but then no more at all as thou hast been shalt  
thou be :

Needs must many dwell in darkness, that some may  
look on light ;

Needs must poor men brook the wrong that ensures  
the rich man's right.

How shall kings and lords be worshipped, if no man  
bow the knee ?

How, if no man worship these, may thy praise  
endure with thee ?

How, except thou trust in these, shall thy name not  
lose its might ?

These have had their will of thee since the Norman  
came to smite :

Sires on grandsires, even as wave after wave along  
the sea,

Sons on sires have followed, steadfast as clouds or  
hours in flight.

Time alone hath power to say, time alone hath  
eyes to see,

If your walls of rule be built but of clay-compacted  
sods,

If your place of old shall know you no more, O Lords  
our Gods.

## III

Through the stalls wherein ye sit sounds a sentence  
while we wait,

Set your house in order : is it not builded on the  
sand ?

Set your house in order, seeing the night is hard at  
hand.

As the twilight of the Gods in the northern dream of  
fate

Is this hour that comes against you, albeit this hour  
come late.

Ye whom Time and Truth bade heed, and ye would  
not understand,

Now an axe draws nigh the tree overshadowing all  
the land,

And its edge of doom is set to the root of all your  
state.

Light is more than darkness now, faith than fear and  
hope than hate ;

And what morning wills, behold, all the night shall  
not withstand.

Rods of office, helms of rule, staffs of wise men,  
crowns of great,

While the people willed, ye bare ; now their hopes  
and hearts expand,

Time with silent foot makes dust of your broken  
crowns and rods,

And the lordship of your godhead is gone, O Lords  
our Gods.

## CLEAR THE WAY !

CLEAR the way, my lords and lackeys ! you have had  
your day.

Here you have your answer—England's yea against  
your nay :

Long enough your house has held you : up, and clear  
the way !

Lust and falsehood, craft and traffic, precedent and  
gold,

Tongue of courtier, kiss of harlot, promise bought  
and sold,

Gave you heritage of empire over thralls of old.

Now that all these things are rotten, all their gold is  
rust,

Quenched the pride they lived by, dead the faith and  
cold the lust,

Shall their heritage not also turn again to dust ?

By the grace of these they reigned, who left their sons  
their sway :

By the grace of these, what England says her lords  
unsay :

Till at last her cry go forth against them—Clear the  
way !

By the grace of trust in treason knaves have lived and  
lied :

By the force of fear and folly fools have fed their pride :  
By the strength of sloth and custom reason stands  
defied.

Lest perchance your reckoning on some latter day be  
worse,

Halt and hearken, lords of land and princes of the  
purse,

Ere the tide be full that comes with blessing and with  
curse.

Where we stand, as where you sit, scarce falls a  
sprinkling spray ;

But the wind that swells, the wave that follows, none  
shall stay :

Spread no more of sail for shipwreck : out, and clear  
the way !

## A WORD FOR THE COUNTRY

MEN, born of the land that for ages  
 Has been honoured where freedom was dear,  
 Till your labour wax fat on its wages  
 You shall never be peers of a peer.  
 Where might is, the right is :  
 Long purses make strong swords.  
 Let weakness learn meekness :  
 God save the House of Lords !

You are free to consume in stagnation :  
 You are equal in right to obey :  
 You are brothers in bonds, and the nation  
 Is your mother—whose sons are her prey.  
 Those others your brothers,  
 Who toil not, weave, nor till,  
 Refuse you and use you  
 As waiters on their will.

But your fathers bowed down to their masters  
 And obeyed them and served and adored.  
 Shall the sheep not give thanks to their pastors ?  
 Shall the serf not give praise to his lord ?  
 Time, waning and gaining,  
 Grown other now than then,  
 Needs pastors and masters  
 For sheep, and not for men.



If his grandsire did service in battle,  
If his grandam was kissed by a king,  
Must men to my lord be as cattle  
Or as apes that he leads in a string?  
To deem so, to dream so,  
Would bid the world proclaim  
The dastards for bastards,  
Not heirs of England's fame.

Not in spite but in right of dishonour,  
There are actors who trample your boards  
Till the earth that endures you upon her  
Grows weary to bear you, my lords.  
Your token is broken,  
It will not pass for gold :  
Your glory looks hoary,  
Your sun in heaven turns cold.

They are worthy to reign on their brothers,  
To contemn them as clods and as carles,  
Who are Graces by grace of such mothers  
As brightened the bed of King Charles.  
What manner of banner,  
What fame is this they flaunt,  
That Britain, soul-smitten,  
Should shrink before their vaunt?

Bright sons of sublime prostitution,  
You are made of the mire of the street  
Where your grandmothers walked in pollution  
Till a coronet shone at their feet.  
Your Graces, whose faces  
Bear high the bastard's brand,  
Seem stronger no longer  
Than all this honest land.



But the sons of her soldiers and seamen,  
They are worthy forsooth of their hire.  
If the father won praise from all free men,  
Shall the sons not exult in their sire ?  
Let money make sunny  
And power make proud their lives,  
And feed them and breed them  
Like drones in drowsiest hives.

But if haply the name be a burden  
And the souls be no kindred of theirs,  
Should wise men rejoice in such guerdon  
Or brave men exult in such heirs ?  
Or rather the father  
Frown, shamefaced, on the son,  
And no men but foemen,  
Deriding, cry " Well done " ?

Let the gold and the land they inherit  
Pass ever from hand into hand :  
In right of the forefather's merit  
Let the gold be the son's, and the land.  
Soft raiment, rich payment,  
High place, the state affords ;  
Full measure of pleasure ;  
But now no more, my lords.

Is the future beleaguered with dangers  
If the poor be far other than slaves ?  
Shall the sons of the land be as strangers  
In the land of their forefathers' graves ?  
Shame were it to bear it,  
And shame it were to see :  
If free men you be, men,  
Let proof proclaim you free.

“ But democracy means dissolution :  
See, laden with clamour and crime,  
How the darkness of dim revolution  
Comes deepening the twilight of time !  
Ah, better the fetter  
That holds the poor man's hand  
Than peril of sterile  
Blind change that wastes the land.

“ Gaze forward through clouds that environ ;  
It shall be as it was in the past :  
Not with dreams, but with blood and with iron,  
Shall a nation be moulded to last.”  
So teach they, so preach they,  
Who dream themselves the dream  
That hallows the gallows  
And bids the scaffold stream.

“ With a hero at head, and a nation  
Well gagged and well drilled and well cowed,  
And a gospel of war and damnation,  
Has not empire a right to be proud ?  
Fools prattle and tattle  
Of freedom, reason, right,  
The beauty of duty,  
The loveliness of light.

“ But we know, we believe it, we see it,  
Force only has power upon earth.”  
So be it ! and ever so be it  
For souls that are bestial by birth !  
Let Prussian with Russian  
Exchange the kiss of slaves :  
But sea-folk are free folk  
By grace of winds and waves.

Has the past from the sepulchres beckoned ?

Let answer from Englishmen be—

No man shall be lord of us reckoned

Who is baser, not better, than we.

No coward, empowered

To soil a brave man's name :

For shame's sake and fame's sake,

Enough of fame and shame.

Fame needs not the golden addition ;

Shame bears it abroad as a brand.

Let the deed, and no more the tradition,

Speak out and be heard through the land.

Pride, rootless and fruitless,

No longer takes and gives :

But surer and purer

The soul of England lives.

He is master and lord of his brothers

Who is worthier and wiser than they.

Him only, him surely, shall others,

Else equal, observe and obey.

Truth, flawless and awless,

Do falsehood what it can,

Makes royal the loyal

And simple heart of man.

Who are these, then, that England should hearken,

Who rage and wax wroth and grow pale

If she turn from the sunsets that darken

And her ship for the morning set sail ?

Let strangers fear dangers :

All know, that hold her dear,

Dishonour upon her

Can only fall through fear.

Men, born of the landsmen and seamen  
Who served her with souls and with swords,  
She bids you be brothers, and free men,  
And lordless, and fearless of lords.  
She cares not, she dares not  
Care now for gold or steel :  
Light lead her, truth speed her,  
God save the Commonweal !

## A WORD FOR THE NATION

## I

A WORD across the water  
 Against our ears is borne,  
 Of threatenings and of slaughter,  
 Of rage and spite and scorn :  
 We have not, alack, an ally to befriend us,  
 And the season is ripe to extirpate and end us :  
 Let the German touch hands with the Gaul,  
 And the fortress of England must fall ;  
 And the sea shall be swept of her seamen,  
 And the waters they ruled be their graves,  
 And Dutchmen and Frenchmen be free men,  
 And Englishmen slaves.

## II

Our time once more is over,  
 Once more our end is near :  
 A bull without a drover,  
 The Briton reels to rear,  
 And the van of the nations is held by his betters,  
 And the seas of the world shall be loosed from  
 his fetters,  
 And his glory shall pass as a breath,  
 And the life that is in him be death ;

And the sepulchre sealed on his glory  
For a sign to the nations shall be  
As of Tyre and of Carthage in story,  
Once lords of the sea.

## III

The lips are wise and loyal,  
The hearts are brave and true,  
Imperial thoughts and royal  
Make strong the clamorous crew,  
Whence louder and prouder the noise of defiance  
Rings rage from the grave of a trustless alliance,  
And bids us beware and be warned,  
As abhorred of all nations and scorned,  
As a swordless and spiritless nation,  
A wreck on the waste of the waves.  
So foams the released indignation  
Of masterless slaves.

## IV

Brute throats that miss the collar,  
Bowed backs that ask the whip,  
Stretched hands that lack the dollar,  
And many a lie-seared lip,  
Forefeel and foreshow for us signs as funereal  
As the signs that were regal of yore and imperial ;  
We shall pass as the princes they served,  
We shall reap what our fathers deserved,  
And the place that was England's be taken  
By one that is worthier than she,  
And the yoke of her empire be shaken  
Like spray from the sea.

## V

French hounds, whose necks are aching  
Still from the chain they crave,  
In dog-day madness breaking  
The dog-leash, thus may rave :  
But the seas that for ages have fostered and fenced  
her  
Laugh, echoing the yell of their kennel against her  
And their moan if destruction draw near them  
And the roar of her laughter to hear them ;  
For she knows that if Englishmen be men  
Their England has all that she craves ;  
All love and all honour from free men,  
All hatred from slaves.

## VI

All love that rests upon her  
Like sunshine and sweet air,  
All light of perfect honour  
And praise that ends in prayer,  
She wins not more surely, she wears not more  
proudly,  
Than the token of tribute that clatters thus loudly,  
The tribute of foes when they meet  
That rattles and rings at her feet,  
The tribute of rage and of rancour,  
The tribute of slaves to the free,  
To the people whose hope hath its anchor  
Made fast in the sea.



## VII

No fool that bows the back he  
Feels fit for scourge or brand,  
No scurril scribes that lackey  
The lords of Lackeyland,  
No penman that yearns, as he turns on his pallet,  
For the place or the pence of a peer or a valet,  
No whelp of as currish a pack  
As the litter whose yelp it gives back,  
Though he answer the cry of his brother  
As echoes might answer from caves,  
Shall be witness as though for a mother  
Whose children were slaves.

## VIII

But those found fit to love her,  
Whose love has root in faith,  
Who hear, though darkness cover  
Time's face, what memory saith,  
Who seek not the service of great men or small men  
But the weal that is common for comfort of all men,  
Those yet that in trust have beholden  
Truth's dawn over England grow golden  
And quicken the darkness that stagnates  
And scatter the shadows that flee,  
Shall reply for her meanest as magnates  
And masters by sea.

## IX

And all shall mark her station,  
Her message all shall hear,  
When, equal-eyed, the nation  
Bids all her sons draw near,

And freedom be more than tradition or faction,  
And thought be no swifter to serve her than action,  
And justice alone be above her,  
That love may be prouder to love her,  
And time on the crest of her story

Inscribe, as remembrance engraves,  
The sign that subdues with its glory  
Kings, princes, and slaves.

## A WORD FROM THE PSALMIST

Ps. xciv. 8

†

“TAKE heed, ye unwise among the people :  
 O ye fools, when will ye understand ?”  
 From pulpit or choir beneath the steeple,  
 Though the words be fierce, the tones are  
 bland.

But a louder than the Church's echo thunders  
 In the ears of men who may not choose but hear ;  
 And the heart in him that hears it leaps and wonders,  
 With triumphant hope astonished, or with fear.  
 For the names whose sound was power awaken  
 Neither love nor reverence now nor dread ;  
 Their strongholds and shrines are stormed and  
 taken,  
 Their kingdom and all its works are dead.

II

Take heed : for the tide of time is risen :  
 It is full not yet, though now so high  
 That spirits and hopes long pent in prison  
 Feel round them a sense of freedom nigh,

And a savour keen and sweet of brine and billow,  
And a murmur deep and strong of deepening  
strength.

Though the watchman dream, with sloth or pride for  
pillow,

And the night be long, not endless is its length.

From the springs of dawn, from clouds that sever,

From the equal heavens and the eastward sea,

The witness comes that endures for ever,

Till men be brethren and thralls be free.

III

But the wind of the wings of dawn expanding  
Strikes chill on your hearts as change and  
death.

Ye are old, but ye have not understanding ;

And proud, but your pride is a dead man's  
breath.

And your wise men, toward whose words and signs  
ye hearken,

And your strong men, in whose hands ye put your  
trust,

Strain eyes to behold but clouds and dreams that  
darken,

Stretch hands that can find but weapons red with  
rust.

Their watchword rings, and the night rejoices,

But the lark's note laughs at the night-bird's  
notes—

“Is virtue verily found in voices ?

Or is wisdom won when all win votes ?

## IV

“ Take heed, ye unwise indeed, who listen  
When the wind's wings beat and shift and  
change ;  
Whose hearts are uplift, whose eyeballs glisten,  
With desire of new things great and strange.  
Let not dreams misguide nor any visions wrong you :  
That which has been, it is now as it was then.  
Is not Compromise of old a god among you ?  
Is not Precedent indeed a king of men ?  
But the windy hopes that lead mislead you,  
And the sounds ye hear are void and vain,  
Is a vote a coat ? will franchise feed you,  
Or words be a roof against the rain ?

## V

“ Eight ages are gone since kingship entered,  
With knights and peers at its harnessed back,  
And the land, no more in its own strength centred,  
Was cast for a prey to the princely pack.  
But we pared the fangs and clipped the ravening  
claws of it,  
And good was in time brought forth of an evil  
thing,  
And the land's high name waxed lordlier in war  
because of it,  
When chartered Right had bridled and curbed the  
king.  
And what so fair has the world beholden,  
And what so firm has withstood the years,  
As Monarchy bound in chains all golden,  
And Freedom guarded about with peers ?

## VI

" How think ye ? know not your lords and masters  
 What collars are meet for brawling throats ?  
 Is change not mother of strange disasters ?  
 Shall plague or peril be stayed by votes ?  
 Out of precedent and privilege and order  
 Have we plucked the flower of compromise, whose  
     root  
 Bears blossoms that shine from border again to  
     border,  
 And the mouths of many are fed with its temperate  
     fruit.  
 Your masters are wiser than ye, their henchmen :  
 Your lords know surely whereof ye have need.  
 Equality ? Fools, would you fain be Frenchmen ?  
 Is equity more than a word indeed ?

## VII

" Your voices, forsooth, your most sweet voices,  
 Your worthy voices, your love, your hate,  
 Your choice, who know not whereof your choice is,  
 What stays are these for a stable state ?  
 Inconstancy, blind and deaf with its own fierce babble,  
 Swells ever your throats with storm of uncertain  
     cheers :  
 He leans on straws who leans on a light-souled  
     rabble ;  
 His trust is frail who puts not his trust in peers."  
 So shrills the message whose word convinces  
 Of righteousness knaves, of wisdom fools ;  
 That serfs may boast them because of princes,  
 And the weak rejoice that the strong man rules.



## VIII

True friends, ye people, are these, the faction  
     Full-mouthed that flatters and snarls and bays,  
 That fawns and foams with alternate action,  
     And mocks the names that it soils with praise.  
 As from fraud and force their power had first begin-  
     ning,  
 So by righteousness and peace it may not stand,  
 But by craft of state and nets of secret spinning,  
 Words that weave and unweave wiles like ropes of  
     sand,  
 Form, custom, and gold, and laws grown hoary,  
     And strong tradition that guards the gate :  
 To these, O people, to these give glory,  
     That your name among nations may be great.

## IX

How long—for haply not now much longer—  
     Shall fear put faith in a faithless creed,  
 And shapes and shadows of truths be stronger  
     In strong men's eyes than the truth indeed ?  
 If freedom be not a word that dies when spoken,  
     If justice be not a dream whence men must wake,  
 How shall not the bonds of the thraldom of old be  
     broken,  
 And right put might in the hands of them that  
     break ?  
 For clear as a tocsin from the steeple  
     Is the cry gone forth along the land,  
 Take heed, ye unwise among the people :  
     O ye fools, when will ye understand ?



## A BALLAD AT PARTING

SEA to sea that clasps and fosters England, uttering  
 evermore

Song eterne and praise immortal of the indomitable  
 shore,

Lifts aloud her constant heart up, south to north  
 and east to west,

Here in speech that shames all music, there in thunder-  
 throated roar,

Chiming concord out of discord, waking rapture  
 out of rest.

All her ways are lovely, all her works and symbols  
 are divine,

Yet shall man love best what first bade leap his  
 heart and bend his knee ;

Yet where first his whole soul worshipped shall his  
 soul set up her shrine :

Nor may love not know the lovelier, fair as both  
 beheld may be,

Here the limitless north-eastern, there the strait  
 south-western sea.

Though their chant bear all one burden, as ere man  
 was born it bore ;

Though the burden be diviner than the songs all  
 souls adore ;

Yet may love not choose but choose between them  
which to love the best.

Me the sea my nursing-mother, me the Channel  
green and hoar,

Holds at heart more fast than all things, bares for  
me the goodlier breast,

Lifts for me the lordlier love-song, bids for me more  
sunlight shine,

Sounds for me the stormier trumpet of the  
sweeter strain to me.

So the broad pale Thames is loved not like the tawny  
springs of Tyne :

Choice is clear between them for the soul whose  
vision holds in fee

Here the limitless north-eastern, there the strait  
south-western sea.

Choice is clear, but dear is either ; nor has either not  
in store

Many a likeness, many a written sign of spirit-  
searching lore,

Whence the soul takes fire of sweet remembrance,  
magnified and blest.

Thought of songs whose flame-winged feet have trod  
the unfooted water-floor

When the lord of all the living lords of souls bade  
speed their quest ;

Soft live sound like children's babble down the  
rippling sand's incline,

Or the lovely song that loves them, hailed with  
thankful prayer and plea ;

These are parcels of the harvest here whose gathered  
sheaves are mine,

Garnered now, but sown and reaped where winds  
make wild with wrath or glee  
Here the limitless north-eastern, there the strait  
south-western sea.

Song, thy name is freedom, seeing thy strength was  
born of breeze and brine.

Fare now forth and fear no fortune : such a seal is  
set on thee.

Joy begat and memory bare thee, seeing in spirit a  
twofold sign,

Even the sign of those thy fosters, each as thou  
from all time free,

Here the limitless north-eastern, there the strait  
south-western sea.



# ASTROPHEL

AND OTHER POEMS

TO WILLIAM MORRIS

## ASTROPHEL

AFTER READING SIR PHILIP SIDNEY'S ARCADIA IN THE  
GARDEN OF AN OLD ENGLISH MANOR HOUSE

## I

A STAR in the silence that follows  
The song of the death of the sun  
Speaks music in heaven, and the hollows  
And heights of the world are as one ;  
One lyre that outsings and outlightens  
The rapture of sunset, and thrills  
Mute night till the sense of it brightens  
The soul that it fills.

The flowers of the sun that is sunken  
Hang heavy of heart as of head ;  
The bees that have eaten and drunken  
The soul of their sweetness are fled ;  
But a sunflower of song, on whose honey  
My spirit has fed as a bee,  
Makes sunnier than morning was sunny  
The twilight for me.

The letters and lines on the pages  
That sundered mine eyes and the flowers



Wax faint as the shadows of ages  
That sunder their season and ours ;  
As the ghosts of the centuries that sever  
A season of colourless time  
From the days whose remembrance is ever,  
As they were, sublime.

The season that bred and that cherished  
The soul that I commune with yet,  
Had it utterly withered and perished  
To rise not again as it set,  
Shame were it that Englishmen living  
Should read as their forefathers read  
The books of the praise and thanksgiving  
Of Englishmen dead

O light of the land that adored thee  
And kindled thy soul with her breath,  
Whose life, such as fate would afford thee,  
Was lovelier than aught but thy death,  
By what name, could thy lovers but know it,  
Might love of thee hail thee afar,  
Philisides, Astrophel, poet  
Whose love was thy star ?

A star in the moondawn of Maytime,  
A star in the cloudland of change ;  
Too splendid and sad for the daytime  
To cheer or eclipse or estrange ;  
Too sweet for tradition or vision  
To see but through shadows of tears  
Rise deathless across the division  
Of measureless years.

The twilight may deepen and harden  
As nightward the stream of it runs  
Till starshine transfigure a garden  
Whose radiance responds to the sun's :  
The light of the love of thee darkens  
The lights that arise and that set :  
The love that forgets thee not hearkens  
If England forget.

## II

Bright and brief in the sight of grief and love the light  
of thy lifetime shone,  
Seen and felt by the gifts it dealt, the grace it gave,  
and again was gone :  
Ay, but now it is death, not thou, whom time has  
conquered as years pass on.

Ay, not yet may the land forget that bore and loved  
thee and praised and wept,  
Sidney, lord of the stainless sword, the name of  
names that her heart's love kept  
Fast as thine did her own, a sign to light thy life till  
it sank and slept.

Bright as then for the souls of men thy brave Arcadia  
resounds and shines,  
Lit with love that beholds above all joys and sorrows  
the steadfast signs,  
Faith, a splendour that hope makes tender, and truth,  
whose presage the soul divines.

All the glory that girds the story of all thy life as  
with sunlight round,

All the spell that on all souls fell who saw thy spirit,  
and held them bound,  
Lives for all that have heard the call and cadence yet  
of its music sound.

Music bright as the soul of light, for wings an eagle,  
for notes a dove,  
Leaps and shines from the lustrous lines where-  
through thy soul from afar above  
Shone and sang till the darkness rang with light  
whose fire is the fount of love.

Love that led thee alive, and fed thy soul with  
sorrows and joys and fears,  
Love that sped thee, alive and dead, to fame's fair  
goal with thy peerless peers,  
Feeds the flame of thy quenchless name with light  
that lightens the rayless years.

Dark as sorrow though night and morrow may lower  
with presage of clouded fame,  
How may she that of old bare thee, may Sidney's  
England, be brought to shame?  
How should this be, while England is? What need  
of answer beyond thy name?

## III

From the love that transfigures thy glory,  
From the light of the dawn of thy death,  
The life of thy song and thy story  
Took subtler and fierier breath.

And we, though the day and the morrow  
Set fear and thanksgiving at strife,  
Hail yet in the star of thy sorrow  
The sun of thy life.

Shame and fear may beset men here, and bid thanks-  
giving and pride be dumb :  
Faith, discrowned of her praise, and wound about  
with toils till her life wax numb,  
Scarce may see if the sundawn be, if darkness die  
not and dayrise come.

But England, enmeshed and benetted  
With spiritless villainies round,  
With counsels of cowardice fretted,  
With trammels of treason enwound,  
Is yet, though the season be other  
Than wept and rejoiced over thee,  
Thine England, thy lover, thy mother,  
Sublime as the sea.

Hers wast thou : if her face be now less bright, or  
seem for an hour less brave,  
Let but thine on her darkness shine, thy saviour  
spirit revive and save,  
Time shall see, as the shadows flee, her shame  
entombed in a shameful grave.

If death and not life were the portal  
That opens on life at the last,  
If the spirit of Sidney were mortal  
And the past of it utterly past,

Fear stronger than honour was ever,  
Forgetfulness mightier than fame,  
Faith knows not if England should never  
Subside into shame.

Yea, but yet is thy sun not set, thy sunbright spirit  
of trust withdrawn :  
England's love of thee burns above all hopes that  
darken or fears that fawn :  
Hers thou art : and the faithful heart that hopes  
begets upon darkness dawn.

The sunset that sunrise will follow  
Is less than the dream of a dream :  
The starshine on height and on hollow  
Sheds promise that dawn shall redeem :  
The night, if the daytime would hide it,  
Shows lovelier, aflame and afar,  
Thy soul and thy Stella's beside it,  
A star by a star.

## A NYMPHOLEPT

SUMMER, and noon, and a splendour of silence, felt,  
 Seen, and heard of the spirit within the sense.  
 Soft through the frondage the shades of the sun-  
   beams melt,  
 Sharp through the foliage the shafts of them, keen  
   and dense,  
 Cleave, as discharged from the string of the God's  
   bow, tense  
 As a war-steed's girth, and bright as a warrior's belt.  
 Ah, why should an hour that is heaven for an hour  
   pass hence ?

I dare not sleep for delight of the perfect hour,  
 Lest God be wroth that his gift should be scorned  
   of man.  
 The face of the warm bright world is the face of a  
   flower,  
 The word of the wind and the leaves that the light  
   winds fan  
 As the word that quickened at first into flame, and  
   ran,  
 Creative and subtle and fierce with invasive power,  
 Through darkness and cloud, from the breath of  
   the one God, Pan.



The perfume of earth possessed by the sun pervades  
The chaster air that he soothes but with sense of  
sleep.

Soft, imminent, strong as desire that prevails and  
fades,

The passing noon that beholds not a cloudlet weep  
Imbues and impregnates life with delight more  
deep

Than dawn or sunset or moonrise on lawns or glades  
Can shed from the skies that receive it and may  
not keep.

The skies may hold not the splendour of sundown  
fast ;

It wanes into twilight as dawn dies down into  
day.

And the moon, triumphant when twilight is overpast,  
Takes pride but awhile in the hours of her stately  
sway.

But the might of the noon, though the light of it  
pass away,

Leaves earth fulfilled of desires and of dreams that  
last ;

But if any there be that hath sense of them none  
can say.

For if any there be that hath sight of them, sense, or  
trust

Made strong by the might of a vision, the strength  
of a dream,

His lips shall straiten and close as a dead man's  
must,

His heart shall be sealed as the voice of a frost-  
bound stream.



For the deep mid mystery of light and of heat that  
seem

To clasp and pierce dark earth, and enkindle dust,  
Shall a man's faith say what it is? or a man's  
guess deem?

Sleep lies not heavier on eyes that have watched all  
night

Than hangs the heat of the noon on the hills and  
trees.

Why now should the haze not open, and yield to  
sight

A fairer secret than hope or than slumber sees?

I seek not heaven with submission of lips and knees,  
With worship and prayer for a sign till it leap to  
light :

I gaze on the gods about me, and call on these.

I call on the gods hard by, the divine dim powers

Whose likeness is here at hand, in the breathless  
air,

In the pulseless peace of the fervid and silent flowers,

In the faint sweet speech of the waters that whisper  
there.

Ah, what should darkness do in a world so fair?

The bent-grass heaves not, the couch-grass quails  
not or cowers ;

The wind's kiss frets not the rowan's or aspen's  
hair.

But the silence trembles with passion of sound sup-  
pressed,

And the twilight quivers and yearns to the sun-  
ward, wrung

With love as with pain ; and the wide wood's motionless breast

Is thrilled with a dumb desire that would fain find tongue

And palpitates, tongueless as she whom a man-snake stung,

Whose heart now heaves in the nightingale, never at rest

Nor satiated ever with song till her last be sung.

Is it rapture or terror that circles me round, and invades

Each vein of my life with hope—if it be not fear ?

Each pulse that awakens my blood into rapture fades,

Each pulse that subsides into dread of a strange thing near

Requickness with sense of a terror less dread than dear.

Is peace not one with light in the deep green glades

Where summer at noonday slumbers ? Is peace not here ?

The tall thin stems of the firs, and the roof sublime

That screens from the sun the floor of the steep still wood,

Deep, silent, splendid, and perfect and calm as time,

Stand fast as ever in sight of the night they stood,

When night gave all that moonlight and dewfall could.

The dense ferns deepen, the moss glows warm as the thyme :

The wild heath quivers about me : the world is good.

Is it Pan's breath, fierce in the tremulous maidenhair,  
That bids fear creep as a snake through the wood-  
lands, felt

In the leaves that it stirs not yet, in the mute bright air,  
In the stress of the sun? For here has the great  
God dwelt :

For hence were the shafts of his love or his anger  
dealt.

For here has his wrath been fierce as his love was fair,  
When each was as fire to the darkness its breath  
bade melt.

Is it love, is it dread, that enkindles the trembling  
noon,

That yearns, reluctant in rapture that fear has fed,  
As man for woman, as woman for man? Full soon,  
If I live, and the life that may look on him drop  
not dead,

Shall the ear that hears not a leaf quake hear his  
tread,

The sense that knows not the sound of the deep day's  
tune

Receive the God, be it love that he brings or dread.

The naked noon is upon me : the fierce dumb spell,  
The fearful charm of the strong sun's imminent  
might,

Unmerciful, steadfast, deeper than seas that swell,  
Pervades, invades, appals me with loveless light,  
With harsher awe than breathes in the breath of  
night.

Have mercy, God who art all ! For I know thee well,  
How sharp is thine eye to lighten, thine hand to  
smite.

The whole wood feels thee, the whole air fears thee :  
but fear

So deep, so dim, so sacred, is wellnigh sweet.

For the light that hangs and broods on the wood-  
lands here,

Intense, invasive, intolerant, imperious, and meet  
To lighten the works of thine hands and the ways  
of thy feet,

Is hot with the fire of the breath of thy life, and dear  
As hope that shrivels or shrinks not for frost or  
heat.

Thee, thee the supreme dim godhead, approved afar,  
Perceived of the soul and conceived of the sense of  
man,

We scarce dare love, and we dare not fear : the star  
We call the sun, that lit us when life began  
To brood on the world that is thine by his grace  
for a span,

Conceals and reveals in the semblance of things that  
are

Thine immanent presence, the pulse of thy heart's  
life, Pan.

The fierce mid noon that wakens and warms the  
snake

Conceals thy mercy, reveals thy wrath : and again  
The dew-bright hour that assuages the twilight  
brake

Conceals thy wrath and reveals thy mercy : then  
Thou art fearful only for evil souls of men  
That feel with nightfall the serpent within them  
wake,

And hate the holy darkness on glade and glen.

Yea, then we know not and dream not if ill things be,  
Or if aught of the work of the wrong of the world  
be thine.

We hear not the footfall of terror that treads the  
sea,

We hear not the moan of winds that assail the  
pine :

We see not if shipwreck reign in the storm's dim  
shrine ;

If death do service and doom bear witness to thee

We see not,—know not if blood for thy lips be  
wine.

But in all things evil and fearful that fear may scan,  
As in all things good, as in all things fair that fall,

We know thee present and latent, the lord of man ;  
In the murmuring of doves, in the clamouring of  
winds that call

And wolves that howl for their prey ; in the mid-  
night's pall,

In the naked and nymph-like feet of the dawn, O  
Pan,

And in each life living, O thou the God who art all.

Smiling and singing, wailing and wringing of hands,  
Laughing and weeping, watching and sleeping, still  
Proclaim but and prove but thee, as the shifted sands  
Speak forth and show but the strength of the sea's  
wild will

That sifts and grinds them as grain in the storm-  
wind's mill.

In thee is the doom that falls and the doom that  
stands :

The tempests utter thy word, and the stars fulfil.

Where Etna shudders with passion and pain volcanic  
That rend her heart as with anguish that rends a  
man's,  
Where Typho labours, and finds not his thews Titanic,  
In breathless torment that ever the flame's breath  
fans,  
Men felt and feared thee of old, whose pastoral  
clans  
Were given to the charge of thy keeping ; and  
soundless panic  
Held fast the woodland whose depths and whose  
heights were Pan's.

And here, though fear be less than delight, and awe  
Be one with desire and with worship of earth and  
thee,  
So mild seems now thy secret and speechless law,  
So fair and fearless and faithful and godlike she,  
So soft the spell of thy whisper on stream and sea,  
Yet man should fear lest he see what of old men  
saw  
And withered : yet shall I quail if thy breath smite  
me.

Lord God of life and of light and of all things fair,  
Lord God of ravin and ruin and all things dim,  
Death seals up life, and darkness the sunbright air,  
And the stars that watch blind earth in the deep  
night swim  
Laugh, saying, " What God is your God, that ye  
call on him ?  
What is man, that the God who is guide of our way  
should care  
If day for a man be golden, or night be grim ? "



But thou, dost thou hear ? Stars too but abide for a  
span,  
Gods too but endure for a season ; but thou, if  
thou be  
God, more than shadows conceived and adored of man,  
Kind Gods and fierce, that bound him or made him  
free,  
The skies that scorn us are less in thy sight than  
we,  
Whose souls have strength to conceive and perceive  
thee, Pan,  
With sense more subtle than senses that hear and  
see.

Yet may not it say, though it seek thee and think to  
find  
One soul of sense in the fire and the frost-bound  
clod,  
What heart is this, what spirit alive or blind,  
That moves thee : only we know that the ways we  
trod  
We tread, with hands unguided, with feet unshod,  
With eyes unlightened ; and yet, if with steadfast  
mind,  
Perchance may we find thee and know thee at last  
for God.

Yet then should God be dark as the dawn is bright,  
And bright as the night is dark on the world—no  
more.  
Light slays not darkness, and darkness absorbs not  
light ;  
And the labour of evil and good from the years of  
yore



Is even as the labour of waves on a sunless shore.  
And he who is first and last, who is depth and height,  
Keeps silence now, as the sun when the woods  
wax hoar.

The dark dumb godhead innate in the fair world's life  
Imbues the rapture of dawn and of noon with  
dread,

Infects the peace of the star-shod night with strife,  
Informs with terror the sorrow that guards the  
dead.

No service of bended knee or of humbled head  
May soothe or subdue the God who has change to  
wife :

And life with death is as morning with evening wed.

And yet, if the light and the life in the light that here  
Seem soft and splendid and fervid as sleep may  
seem

Be more than the shine of a smile or the flash of a tear,  
Sleep, change, and death are less than a spell-  
struck dream,

And fear than the fall of a leaf on a starlit stream.  
And yet, if the hope that hath said it absorb not fear,  
What helps it man that the stars and the waters  
gleam?

What helps it man, that the noon be indeed intense,  
The night be indeed worth worship? Fear and  
pain

Were lords and masters yet of the secret sense,  
Which now dares deem not that light is as dark-  
ness, fain

Though dark dreams be to declare it, crying in vain.

For whence, thou God of the light and the darkness,  
whence

Dawns now this vision that bids not the sunbeams  
wane?

What light, what shadow, diviner than dawn or  
night,

Draws near, makes pause, and again—or I dream—  
draws near?

More soft than shadow, more strong than the strong  
sun's light,

More pure than moonbeams—yea, but the rays  
run sheer

As fire from the sun through the dusk of the pine-  
wood, clear

And constant ; yea, but the shadow itself is bright

That the light clothes round with love that is one  
with fear.

Above and behind it the noon and the woodland lie,

Terrible, radiant with mystery, superb and subdued,

Triumphant in silence ; and hardly the sacred sky

Seems free from the tyrannous weight of the dumb  
fierce mood

Which rules as with fire and invasion of beams  
that brood

The breathless rapture of earth till its hour pass by

And leave her spirit released and her peace renewed.

I sleep not : never in sleep has a man beholden

This. From the shadow that trembles and yearns  
with light

Suppressed and elate and reluctant—obscure and  
golden

As water kindled with presage of dawn or night—  
A form, a face, a wonder to sense and sight,  
Grows great as the moon through the month ; and  
her eyes embolden  
Fear, till it change to desire, and desire to delight.

I sleep not : sleep would die of a dream so strange ;  
A dream so sweet would die as a rainbow dies,  
As a sunbow laughs and is lost on the waves that  
range  
And reck not of light that flickers or spray that flies.  
But the sun withdraws not, the woodland shrinks  
not or sighs,  
No sweet thing sickens with sense or with fear of  
change ;  
Light wounds not, darkness blinds not, my stead-  
fast eyes.

Only the soul in my sense that receives the soul  
Whence now my spirit is kindled with breathless  
bliss  
Knows well if the light that wounds it with love  
makes whole,  
If hopes that carol be louder than fears that hiss,  
If truth be spoken of flowers and of waves that kiss,  
Of clouds and stars that contend for a sunbright goal.  
And yet may I dream that I dream not indeed of  
this ?

An earth-born dreamer, constrained by the bonds of  
birth,  
Held fast by the flesh, compelled by his veins that  
beat  
And kindle to rapture or wrath, to desire or to mirth,

May hear not surely the fall of immortal feet,  
May feel not surely if heaven upon earth be sweet ;  
And here is my sense fulfilled of the joys of earth,  
Light, silence, bloom, shade, murmur of leaves  
that meet.

Bloom, fervour, and perfume of grasses and flowers  
aglow,  
Breathe and brighten about me : the darkness  
gleams,  
The sweet light shivers and laughs on the slopes  
below,  
Made soft by leaves that lighten and change like  
dreams ;  
The silence thrills with the whisper of secret streams  
That well from the heart of the woodland : these I  
know :  
Earth bore them, heaven sustained them with  
showers and beams.

I lean my face to the heather, and drink the sun  
Whose flame-lit odour satiates the flowers : mine  
eyes  
Close, and the goal of delight and of life is one :  
No more I crave of earth or her kindred skies.  
No more? But the joy that springs from them  
smiles and flies :  
The sweet work wrought of them surely, the good  
work done,  
If the mind and the face of the season be loveless,  
dies.

Thee, therefore, thee would I come to, cleave to,  
cling,  
If haply thy heart be kind and thy gifts be good,

Unknown sweet spirit, whose vesture is soft in spring,  
In summer splendid, in autumn pale as the wood  
That shudders and wanes and shrinks as a shamed  
thing should,  
In winter bright as the mail of a war-worn king  
Who stands where foes fled far from the face of  
him stood.

My spirit or thine is it, breath of thy life or of mine,  
Which fills my sense with a rapture that casts out  
fear?  
Pan's dim frown wanes, and his wild eyes brighten  
as thine,  
Transformed as night or as day by the kindling  
year.  
Earth-born, or mine eye were withered that sees,  
mine ear  
That hears were stricken to death by the sense divine,  
Earth-born I know thee : but heaven is about me  
here.

The terror that whispers in darkness and flames in  
light,  
The doubt that speaks in the silence of earth and  
sea,  
The sense, more fearful at noon than in midmost  
night,  
Of wrath scarce hushed and of imminent ill to be,  
Where are they? Heaven is as earth, and as  
heaven to me  
Earth : for the shadows that sundered them here  
take flight ;  
And nought is all, as am I, but a dream of thee.

## ON THE SOUTH COAST

TO THEODORE WATTS

HILLS and valleys where April rallies his radiant  
 squadron of flowers and birds,  
 Steep strange beaches and lustrous reaches of  
 fluctuant sea that the land engirds,  
 Fields and downs that the sunrise crowns with life  
 diviner than lives in words,

Day by day of resurgent May salute the sun with  
 sublime acclaim,  
 Change and brighten with hours that lighten and  
 darken, girdled with cloud or flame ;  
 Earth's fair face in alternate grace beams, blooms,  
 and lowers, and is yet the same.

Twice each day the divine sea's play makes glad with  
 glory that comes and goes  
 Field and street that her waves keep sweet, when  
 past the bounds of their old repose,  
 Fast and fierce in renewed reverse, the foam-flecked  
 estuary ebbs and flows.



Broad and bold through the stays of old staked fast  
with trunks of the wildwood tree,  
Up from shoreward, impelled far forward, by marsh  
and meadow, by lawn and lea,  
Inland still at her own wild will swells, rolls, and  
revels the surging sea.

Strong as time, and as faith sublime,—clothed round  
with shadows of hopes and fears,  
Nights and morrows, and joys and sorrows, alive  
with passion of prayers and tears,—  
Stands the shrine that has seen decline eight hundred  
waxing and waning years.

Tower set square to the storms of air and change of  
season that glooms and glows,  
Wall and roof of it tempest-proof, and equal ever to  
suns and snows,  
Bright with riches of radiant niches and pillars  
smooth as a straight stem grows.

Aisle and nave that the whelming wave of time has  
whelmed not or touched or neared,  
Arch and vault without stain or fault, by hands of  
craftsmen we know not reared,  
Time beheld them, and time was quelled ; and  
change passed by them as one that feared.

Time that flies as a dream, and dies as dreams that  
die with the sleep they feed,  
Here alone in a garb of stone incarnate stands as a  
god indeed,  
Stern and fair, and of strength to bear all burdens  
mortal to man's frail seed.



Men and years are as leaves or tears that storm or  
sorrow is fain to shed :  
These go by as the winds that sigh, and none takes  
note of them quick or dead :  
Time, whose breath is their birth and death, folds  
here his pinions, and bows his head.

Still the sun that beheld begun the work wrought  
here of unwearied hands  
Sees, as then, though the Red King's men held  
ruthless rule over lawless lands,  
Stand their massive design, impassive, pure and  
proud as a virgin stands.

Statelier still as the years fulfil their count, subserving  
her sacred state,  
Grows the hoary grey church whose story silence  
utters and age makes great :  
Statelier seems it than shines in dreams the face un-  
veiled of unvanquished fate.

Fate, more high than the star-shown sky, more deep  
than waters unsounded, shines  
Keen and far as the final star on souls that seek not  
for charms or signs ;  
Yet more bright is the love-shown light of men's  
hands lighted in songs or shrines.

Love and trust that the grave's deep dust can soil  
not, neither may fear put out,  
Witness yet that their record set stands fast, though  
years be as hosts in rout,  
Spent and slain ; but the signs remain that beat  
back darkness and cast forth doubt.

Men that wrought by the grace of thought and toil  
things goodlier than praise dare trace,  
Fair as all that the world may call most fair, save  
only the sea's own face,  
Shrines or songs that the world's change wrongs not,  
live by grace of their own gift's grace.

Dead, their names that the night reclaims—alive,  
their works that the day relumes—  
Sink and stand, as in stone and sand engraven : none  
may behold their tombs :  
Nights and days shall record their praise while here  
this flower of their grafting blooms.

Flower more fair than the sun-thrilled air bids laugh  
and lighten and wax and rise,  
Fruit more bright than the fervent light sustains  
with strength from the kindled skies,  
Flower and fruit that the deathless root of man's  
love rears though the man's name dies.

Stately stands it, the work of hands unknown of :  
statelier, afar and near,  
Rise around it the heights that bound our landward  
gaze from the seaboard here ;  
Downs that swerve and aspire, in curve and change  
of heights that the dawn holds dear.

Dawn falls fair on the grey walls there confronting  
dawn, on the low green lea,  
Lone and sweet as for fairies' feet held sacred, silent  
and strange and free,  
Wild and wet with its rills ; but yet more fair falls  
dawn on the fairer sea.

Eastward, round by the high green bound of hills  
that fold the remote fields in,  
Strive and shine on the low sea-line fleet waves and  
beams when the days begin ;  
Westward glow, when the days burn low, the sun  
that yields and the stars that win.

Rose-red eve on the seas that heave sinks fair as  
dawn when the first ray peers ;  
Winds are glancing from sunbright Lancing to  
Shoreham, crowned with the grace of years ;  
Shoreham, clad with the sunset, glad and grave with  
glory that death reveres.

Death, more proud than the kings' heads bowed  
before him, stronger than all things, bows  
Here his head : as if death were dead, and kingship  
plucked from his crownless brows,  
Life hath here such a face of cheer as change appals  
not and time avows.

Skies fulfilled with the sundown, stilled and splendid,  
spread as a flower that spreads,  
Pave with rarer device and fairer than heaven's the  
luminous oyster-beds,  
Grass-embanked, and in square plots ranked, inlaid  
with gems that the sundown sheds.

Squares more bright and with lovelier light than  
heaven that kindled it shines with shine  
Warm and soft as the dome aloft, but heavenlier yet  
than the sun's own shrine :  
Heaven is high, but the water-sky lit here seems  
deeper and more divine.

Flowers on flowers, that the whole world's bowers  
may show not, here may the sunset show,  
Lightly graven in the waters paven with ghostly gold  
by the clouds aglow :  
Bright as love is the vault above, but lovelier lightens  
the wave below.

Rosy grey, or as fiery spray full-plumed, or greener  
than emerald, gleams  
Plot by plot as the skies allot for each its glory,  
divine as dreams  
Lit with fire of appeased desire which sounds the  
secret of all that seems ;

Dreams that show what we fain would know, and  
know not save by the grace of sleep,  
Sleep whose hands have removed the bands that eyes  
long waking and fain to weep  
Feel fast bound on them—light around them strange,  
and darkness above them steep.

Yet no vision that heals division of love from love,  
and renews awhile  
Life and breath in the lips where death has quenched  
the spirit of speech and smile,  
Shows on earth, or in heaven's mid mirth, where no  
fears enter or doubts defile,

Aught more fair than the radiant air and water here  
by the twilight wed,  
Here made one by the waning sun whose last love  
quickenens to rosebright red  
Half the crown of the soft high down that rears to  
northward its wood-girt head.

There, when day is at height of sway, men's eyes  
    who stand, as we oft have stood,  
High where towers with its world of flowers the  
    golden spinny that flanks the wood,  
See before and around them shore and seaboard glad  
    as their gifts are good.

Higher and higher to the north aspire the green  
    smooth-swelling unending downs ;  
East and west on the brave earth's breast glow  
    girdle-jewels of gleaming towns ;  
Southward shining, the lands declining subside in  
    peace that the sea's light crowns.

Westward wide in its fruitful pride the plain lies  
    lordly with plenteous grace ;  
Fair as dawn's when the fields and lawns desire her  
    glitters the glad land's face :  
Eastward yet is the sole sign set of elder days and a  
    lordlier race.

Down beneath us afar, where seethe in wilder weather  
    the tides aflow,  
Hurled up hither and drawn down thither in quest of  
    rest that they may not know,  
Still as dew on a flower the blue broad stream now  
    sleeps in the fields below.

Mild and bland in the fair green land it smiles, and  
    takes to its heart the sky ;  
Scarce the meads and the fens, the reeds and grasses,  
    still as they stand or lie,  
Wear the palm of a statelier calm than rests on waters  
    that pass them by.

Yet shall these, when the winds and seas of equal  
days and coequal nights

Rage, rejoice, and uplift a voice whose sound is even  
as a sword that smites,

Felt and heard as a doomsman's word from seaward  
reaches to landward heights,

Lift their heart up, and take their part of triumph,  
swollen and strong with rage,

Rage elate with desire and great with pride that  
tempest and storm assuage ;

So their chime in the ear of time has rung from age  
to rekindled age.

Fair and dear is the land's face here, and fair man's  
work as a man's may be :

Dear and fair as the sunbright air is here the record  
that speaks him free ;

Free by birth of a sacred earth, and regent ever of all  
the sea.



## AN AUTUMN VISION

OCTOBER 31, 1889

Ζεφύρου γίγαντος αἶρα

## I

Is it Midsummer here in the heavens that illumine  
October on earth ?

Can the year, when his heart is fulfilled with desire  
of the days of his mirth,

Redeem them, recall, or remember ?

For a memory recalling the rapture of earth, and  
redeeming the sky,

Shines down from the heights to the depths : will the  
watchword of dawn be July

When to-morrow acclaims November ?

The stern salutation of sorrow to death or repentance  
to shame

Was all that the season was wont to accord her of  
grace or acclaim ;

No lightnings of love and of laughter.

But here, in the laugh of the loud west wind from  
around and above,

In the flash of the waters beneath him, what sound  
or what light but of love

Rings round him or leaps forth after ?



## II

Wind beloved of earth and sky and sea beyond all  
winds that blow,  
Wind whose might in fight was England's on her  
mightiest warrior day,  
South-west wind, whose breath for her was life, and  
fire to scourge her foe,  
Steel to smite and death to drive him down an  
unreturning way,  
Well-beloved and welcome, sounding all the clarions  
of the sky,  
Rolling all the marshalled waters toward the charge  
that storms the shore,  
We receive, acclaim, salute thee, we who live and  
dream and die,  
As the mightiest mouth of song that ever spake  
acclaimed of yore.  
We that live as they that perish praise thee, lord of  
cloud and wave,  
Wind of winds, clothed on with darkness whence  
as lightning light comes forth,  
We that know thee strong to guard and smite, to  
scatter and to save,  
We to whom the south-west wind is dear as Athens  
held the north.  
He for her waged war as thou for us against all  
powers defiant,  
Fleets full-fraught with storm from Persia, laden  
deep with death from Spain:  
Thee the giant god of song and battle hailed as god  
and giant,  
Yet not his but ours the land is whence thy praise  
should ring and rain ;

Rain as rapture shed from song, and ring as trumpets  
blown for battle,

Sound and sing before thee, loud and glad as leaps  
and sinks the sea :

Yea, the sea's white steeds are curbed and spurred  
of thee, and pent as cattle,

Yet they laugh with love and pride to live, subdued  
not save of thee.

Ears that hear thee hear in heaven the sound of  
widening wings gigantic,

Eyes that see the cloud-lift westward see thy  
darkening brows divine ;

Wings whose measure is the limit of the limitless  
Atlantic,

Brows that bend, and bid the sovereign sea submit  
her soul to thine.

## III

Twelve days since is it—twelve days gone,  
Lord of storm, that a storm-bow shone  
Higher than sweeps thy sublime dark wing,  
Fair as dawn is and sweet like spring ?

Never dawn in the deep wide east  
Spread so splendid and strange a feast,  
Whence the soul as it drank and fed  
Felt such rapture of wonder shed.

Never spring in the wild wood's heart  
Felt such flowers at her footfall start,  
Born of earth, as arose on sight  
Born of heaven and of storm and light.

Stern and sullen, the grey grim sea  
Swelled and strove as in toils, though free,  
Free as heaven, and as heaven sublime,  
Clear as heaven of the toils of time.

## IV

Suddenly, sheer from the heights to the depths of the  
sky and the sea,  
Sprang from the darkness alive as a vision of life  
to be  
Glory triune and transcendent of colour afar and afire,  
Arching and darkening the darkness with light as of  
dream or desire.  
Heaven, in the depth of its height, shone wistful and  
wan from above :  
Earth from beneath, and the sea, shone stricken and  
breathless with love.  
As a shadow may shine, so shone they ; as ghosts of  
the viewless blest,  
That sleep hath sight of alive in a rapture of sun-  
bright rest,  
The green earth glowed and the grey sky gleamed for  
a wondrous while ;  
And the storm's full frown was crossed by the light  
of its own deep smile.  
As the darkness of thought and of passion is touched  
by the light that gives  
Life deathless as love from the depth of a spirit that  
sees and lives,  
From the soul of a seer and a singer, wherein as a  
scroll unfurled  
Lies open the scripture of light and of darkness, the  
word of the world,

So, shapeless and measureless, lurid as anguish and  
haggard as crime,  
Pale as the front of oblivion and dark as the heart of  
time,  
The wild wan heaven at its height was assailed and  
subdued and made  
More fair than the skies that know not of storm and  
endure not shade.  
The grim sea-swell, grey, sleepless, and sad as a soul  
estranged,  
Shone, smiled, took heart, and was glad of its wrath :  
and the world's face changed.

## V

Up from moorlands northward gleaming  
Even to heaven's transcendent height,  
Clothed with massive cloud, and seeming  
All one fortress reared of night,  
Down to where the deep sea, dreaming  
Angry dreams, lay dark and white,  
White as death and dark as fate,  
Heaving with the strong wind's weight,  
Sad with stormy pride of state,  
One full rainbow shone elate.

Up from inmost memory's dwelling  
Where the light of life abides,  
Where the past finds tongue, foretelling  
Time that comes and grace that guides,  
Power that saves and sways, compelling  
Souls that ebb and flow like tides,  
Shone or seemed to shine and swim  
Through the cloud-surf great and grim,  
Thought's live surge, the soul of him  
By whose light the sun looks dim.

In what synod were they sitting,  
All the gods and lords of time,  
Whence they watched as fen-fires flitting  
Years and names of men sublime,  
When their counsels found it fitting  
One should stand where none might climb—  
None of man begotten, none  
Born of men beneath the sun  
Till the race of time be run,  
Save this heaven-enfranchised one?

With what rapture of creation  
Was the soul supernal thrilled,  
With what pride of adoration  
Was the world's heart fired and filled,  
Heaved in heavenward exaltation  
Higher than hopes or dreams might build,  
Grave with awe not known while he  
Was not, mad with glorious glee  
As the sun-saluted sea,  
When his hour bade Shakespeare be?

## VI

There, clear as night beholds her crowning seven,  
The sea beheld his likeness set in heaven.  
The shadow of his spirit full in sight  
Shone : for the shadow of that soul is light.  
Nor heaven alone bore witness : earth avowed  
Him present, and acclaimed of storm aloud.  
From the arching sky to the ageless hills and sea  
The whole world, visible, audible, was he :  
Each part of all that wove that wondrous whole  
The raiment of the presence of his soul.  
The sun that smote and kissed the dark to death  
Spake, smiled, and strove, like song's triumphant  
breath;



The soundless cloud whose thunderous heart was  
dumb

Swelled, lowered, and shrank to feel its conqueror  
come.

Yet high from heaven its empire vast and vain  
Frowned, and renounced not night's reluctant reign.

The serpentine swift sounds and shapes wherein

The stainless sea mocks earth and death and sin,

Crawls dark as craft, or flashes keen as hate,

Subdued and insubmissive, strong like fate

And weak-like man, bore wrathful witness yet

That storms and sins are more than suns that set ;

That evil everlasting, girt for strife

Eternal, wars with hope as death with life.

The dark sharp shifting wind that bade the waves

Falter, lose heart, bow down like foes made slaves,

And waxed within more bitter as they bowed,

Baffling the sea, swallowing the sun with cloud,

Devouring fast as fire on earth devours

And hungering hard as frost that feeds on flowers,

Clothed round with fog that reeked as fume from hell,

And darkening with its miscreative spell

Light, glad and keen and splendid as the sword

Whose heft had known Othello's hand its lord,

Spake all the soul that hell drew back to greet

And felt its fire shrink shuddering from his feet.

Far off the darkness darkened, and recoiled,

And neared again, and triumphed : and the coiled

Colourless cloud and sea discoloured grew

Conscious of horror huge as heaven, and knew

Where Goneril's soul made chill and foul the mist,

And all the leprous life in Regan hissed.

Fierce homeless ghosts, rejected of the pit,

From hell to hell of storm fear watched them flit.

About them and before, the dull grey gloom  
Shuddered, and heaven seemed hateful as the tomb  
That shrinks from resurrection ; and from out  
That sullen hell which girt their shades about  
The nether soul that lurks and lowers within  
Man, made of dust and fire and shame and sin,  
Breathed : all the cloud that felt it breathe and blight  
Was blue as plague or black as thunderous night.  
Elect of hell, the children of his hate  
Thronged, as to storm sweet heaven's triumphal  
gate.

The terror of his giving rose and shone  
Imminent : life had put its likeness on.  
But higher than all its horrent height of shade  
Shone sovereign, seen by light itself had made,  
Above the woes of all the world, above  
Life, sin, and death, his myriad-minded love.  
From landward heights whereon the radiance leant  
Full-fraught from heaven, intense and imminent,  
To depths wherein the seething strengths of cloud  
Scarce matched the wrath of waves whereon they  
bowed,

From homeborn pride and kindling love of home  
To the outer skies and seas of fire and foam,  
From splendour soft as dew that sundawn thrills  
To gloom that shudders round the world it fills,  
From midnights murmuring round Titania's ear  
To midnights maddening round the rage of Lear,  
The wonder woven of storm and sun became  
One with the light that lightens from his name.  
The music moving on the sea that felt  
The storm-wind even as snows of springtide melt  
Was blithe as Ariel's hand or voice might make  
And bid all grief die gladly for its sake.



And there the soul alive in ear and eye  
That watched the wonders of an hour pass by  
Saw brighter than all stars that heaven inspheres  
The silent splendour of Cordelia's tears,  
Felt in the whispers of the quickening wind  
The radiance of the laugh of Rosalind,  
And heard, in sounds that melt the souls of men  
With love of love, the tune of Imogen.

## VII

For the strong north-east is not strong to subdue  
and to slay the divine south-west,  
And the darkness is less than the light that it  
darkens, and dies in reluctant rest.  
It hovers and hangs on the labouring and trembling  
ascent of the dawn from the deep,  
Till the sun's eye quicken the world and the waters,  
and smite it again into sleep.  
Night, holy and starry, the fostress of souls, with the  
fragrance of heaven in her breath,  
Subdues with the sense of her godhead the forces and  
mysteries of sorrow and death.  
Eternal as dawn's is the comfort she gives : but the  
mist that beleaguers and slays  
Comes, passes, and is not : the strength of it withers,  
appalled or assuaged by the day's.  
Faith, haggard as Fear that had borne her, and dark  
as the sire that begat her, Despair,  
Held rule on the soul of the world and the song of it  
saddening through ages that were ;  
Dim centuries that darkened and brightened and  
darkened again, and the soul of their song  
Was great as their grief, and sublime as their suffer-  
ing, and strong as their sorrows were strong.

It knew not, it saw not, but shadows triune, and  
evoked by the strength of their spell  
Dark hell, and the mountain of anguish, and heaven  
that was hollower and harder than hell.  
These are not : the womb of the darkness that bare  
them rejects them, and knows them no more :  
Thought, fettered in misery and iron, revives in the  
light that it lived in of yore.  
For the soul that is wisdom and freedom, the spirit  
of England redeemed from her past,  
Speaks life through the lips of the master and  
lord of her children, the first and the last.  
Thought, touched by his hand and redeemed by his  
breath, sees, hears, and accepts from above  
The limitless lightnings of vision and passion, the  
measureless music of love.

## A SWIMMER'S DREAM

NOVEMBER 4, 1889

*Somno mollior unda*

## I

DAWN is dim on the dark soft water,  
 Soft and passionate, dark and sweet.  
 Love's own self was the deep sea's daughter,  
 Fair and flawless from face to feet,  
 Hailed of all when the world was golden,  
 Loved of lovers whose names beholden  
 Thrill men's eyes as with light of olden  
 Days more glad than their flight was fleet.

So they sang : but for men that love her,  
 Souls that hear not her word in vain,  
 Earth beside her and heaven above her  
 Seem but shadows that wax and wane.  
 Softer than sleep's are the sea's caresses,  
 Kinder than love's that betrays and blesses,  
 Blither than spring's when her flowerful tresses  
 Shake forth sunlight and shine with rain.

All the strength of the waves that perish  
    Swells beneath me and laughs and sighs,  
Sighs for love of the life they cherish,  
    Laughs to know that it lives and dies,  
Dies for joy of its life, and lives  
Thrilled with joy that its brief death gives—  
Death whose laugh or whose breath forgives  
    Change that bids it subside and rise.

## II

Hard and heavy, remote but nearing,  
    Sunless hangs the severe sky's weight,  
Cloud on cloud, though the wind be veering  
    Heaped on high to the sundawn's gate.  
Dawn and even and noon are one,  
Veiled with vapour and void of sun ;  
Nought in sight or in fancied hearing  
    Now less mighty than time or fate.

The grey sky gleams and the grey seas glimmer,  
    Pale and sweet as a dream's delight,  
As a dream's where darkness and light seem dimmer,  
    Touched by dawn or subdued by night.  
The dark wind, stern and sublime and sad,  
Swings the rollers to westward, clad  
With lustrous shadow that lures the swimmer,  
    Lures and lulls him with dreams of light.

Light, and sleep, and delight, and wonder,  
    Change, and rest, and a charm of cloud,  
Fill the world of the skies whereunder  
    Heaves and quivers and pants aloud

All the world of the waters, hoary  
Now, but clothed with its own live glory,  
That mates the lightning and mocks the thunder  
With light more living and word more proud.

## III

Far off westward, whither sets the sounding strife,  
Strife more sweet than peace, of shoreless waves  
whose glee  
Scorns the shore and loves the wind that leaves  
them free,  
Strange as sleep and pale as death and fair as life,  
Shifts the moonlight-coloured sunshine on the sea.

Toward the sunset's goal the sunless waters crowd,  
Fast as autumn days toward winter : yet it seems  
Here that autumn wanes not, here that woods and  
streams  
Lose not heart and change not likeness, chilled and  
bowed,  
Warped and wrinkled : here the days are fair as  
dreams.

## IV

O russet-robed November,  
What ails thee so to smile ?  
Chill August, pale September,  
Endured a woful while,  
And fell as falls an ember  
From forth a flameless pile :  
But golden-girt November  
Bids all she looks on smile.

The lustrous foliage, waning  
As wanes the morning moon,  
Here falling, here refraining,  
Outbraves the pride of June  
With statelier semblance, feigning  
No fear lest death be soon :  
As though the woods thus waning  
Should wax to meet the moon.

As though, when fields lie stricken  
By grey December's breath,  
These lordlier growths that sicken  
And die for fear of death  
Should feel the sense requicken  
That hears what springtide saith  
And thrills for love, spring-stricken  
And pierced with April's breath.

The keen white-winged north-easter  
That stings and spurs thy sea  
Doth yet but feed and feast her  
With glowing sense of glee :  
Calm chained her, storm released her,  
And storm's glad voice was he :  
South-wester or north-easter,  
Thy winds rejoice the sea.

## v

A dream, a dream is it all—the season,  
The sky, the water, the wind, the shore ?  
A day-born dream of divine unreason,  
A marvel moulded of sleep—no more ?



For the cloudlike wave that my limbs while cleaving  
Feel as in slumber beneath them heaving  
Soothes the sense as to slumber, leaving  
Sense of nought that was known of yore.

A purer passion, a lordlier leisure,  
A peace more happy than lives on land,  
Fulfills with pulse of diviner pleasure  
The dreaming head and the steering hand.  
I lean my cheek to the cold grey pillow,  
The deep soft swell of the full broad billow,  
And close mine eyes for delight past measure,  
And wish the wheel of the world would stand.

The wild-winged hour that we fain would capture  
Falls as from heaven that its light feet clomb,  
So brief, so soft, and so full the rapture  
Was felt that soothed me with sense of home.  
To sleep, to swim, and to dream, for ever—  
Such joy the vision of man saw never ;  
For here too soon will a dark day sever  
The sea-bird's wing from the sea-wave's foam.

A dream, and more than a dream, and dimmer  
At once and brighter than dreams that flee,  
The moment's joy of the seaward swimmer  
Abides, remembered as truth may be.  
Not all the joy and not all the glory  
Must fade as leaves when the woods wax hoary ;  
For there the downs and the sea-banks glimmer,  
And here to south of them swells the sea.



## GRACE DARLING

TAKE, O star of all our seas, from not an alien  
 hand,  
 Homage paid of song bowed down before thy  
 glory's face,  
 Thou the living light of all our lovely stormy strand,  
 Thou the brave north-country's very glory of  
 glories, Grace.

Loud and dark about the lighthouse rings and glares  
 the night ;  
 Glares with foam-lit gloom and darkling fire of  
 storm and spray,  
 Rings with roar of winds in chase and rage of waves  
 in flight,  
 Howls and hisses as with mouths of snakes and  
 wolves at bay.  
 Scarce the cliffs of the islets, scarce the walls of  
 Joyous Gard,  
 Flash to sight between the deadlier lightnings of  
 the sea :  
 Storm is lord and master of a midnight evil-starred,  
 Nor may sight or fear discern what evil stars may  
 be.

Dark as death and white as snow the sea-swell  
scowls and shines,

Heaves and yearns and pants for prey, from raven-  
ing lip to lip,

Strong in rage of rapturous anguish, lines on hurt-  
ling lines,

Ranks on charging ranks, that break and rend the  
battling ship.

All the night is mad and murderous : who shall front  
the night ?

Not the prow that labours, helpless as a storm-  
blown leaf,

Where the rocks and waters, darkling depth and  
beetling height,

Rage with wave on shattering wave and thundering  
reef on reef.

Death is fallen upon the prisoners there of darkness,  
bound

Like as thralls with links of iron fast in bonds of  
doom ;

How shall any way to break the bands of death be  
found,

Any hand avail to pluck them from that raging  
tomb ?

All the night is great with child of death : no stars  
above

Show them hope in heaven, no lights from shores  
ward help on earth.

Is there help or hope to seaward, is there help in  
love,

Hope in pity, where the ravening hounds of storm  
make mirth ?

Where the light but shows the naked eyeless face of  
Death

Nearer, laughing dumb and grim across the loud  
live storm?  
Not in human heart or hand or speech of human  
breath,  
Surely, nor in saviours found of mortal face or  
form.  
Yet below the light, between the reefs, a skiff shot  
out  
Seems a sea-bird fain to breast and brave the strait  
fierce pass  
Whence the channelled roar of waters driven in  
raging rout,  
Pent and pressed and maddened, speaks their mon-  
strous might and mass.  
Thunder heaves and howls about them, lightning  
leaps and flashes,  
Hard at hand, not high in heaven, but close  
between the walls  
Heaped and hollowed of the storms of old, whence  
reels and crashes  
All the rage of all the unbaffled wave that breaks  
and falls.  
Who shall thwart the madness and the gladness of  
it, laden  
Full with heavy fate, and joyous as the birds that  
whirl?  
Nought in heaven or earth, if not one mortal-moulded  
maiden,  
Nought if not the soul that glorifies a northland  
girl.  
Not the rocks that break may baffle, not the reefs that  
thwart  
Stay the ravenous rapture of the waves that crowd  
and leap ;

Scarce their flashing laughter shows the hunger of  
their heart,

Scarce their lion-throated roar the wrath at heart  
they keep.

Child and man and woman in the grasp of death  
clenched fast

Tremble, clothed with darkness round about, and  
scarce draw breath,

Scarce lift eyes up toward the light that saves not,  
scarce may cast

Thought or prayer up, caught and trammelled in  
the snare of death.

Not as sea-mews cling and laugh or sun their plumes  
and sleep

Cling and cower the wild night's waifs of shipwreck,  
blind with fear,

Where the fierce reef scarce yields foothold that a bird  
might keep,

And the clamorous darkness deadens eye and  
deafens ear.

Yet beyond their helpless hearing, out of hopeless  
sight,

Saviours, armed and girt upon with strength of  
heart, fare forth,

Sire and daughter, hand on oar and face against the  
night,

Maid and man whose names are beacons ever to  
the North.

Nearer now ; but all the madness of the storming  
surf

Hounds and roars them back ; but roars and hounds  
them back in vain :

As a pleasure-skiff may graze the lake-embanking  
turf,

So the boat that bears them grates the rock where-  
toward they strain.  
Dawn as fierce and haggard as the face of night  
scarce guides  
Toward the cries that rent and clove the darkness,  
crying for aid,  
Hours on hours, across the engorged reluctance of the  
tides,  
Sire and daughter, high-souled man and mightier-  
hearted maid.  
Not the bravest land that ever breasted war's grim  
sea,  
Hurled her foes back harried on the lowlands whence  
they came,  
Held her own and smote her smiters down, while such  
durst be,  
Shining northward, shining southward, as the  
aurean flame,  
Not our mother, not Northumberland, brought ever  
forth,  
Though no southern shore may match the sons that  
kiss her mouth,  
Children worthier all the birthright given of the ardent  
north  
Where the fire of hearts outburns the suns that fire  
the south.  
Even such fire was this that lit them, not from lower-  
ing skies  
Where the darkling dawn flagged, stricken in the  
sun's own shrine,  
Down the gulf of storm subsiding, till their earnest  
eyes  
Find the relics of the ravaging night that spared  
but nine.

Life by life the man redeems them, head by storm-  
worn head,

While the girl's hand stays the boat whereof the  
waves are fain :

Ah, but woe for one, the mother clasping fast her  
dead !

Happier, had the surges slain her with her children  
slain.

Back they bear, and bring between them safe the  
woful nine,

Where above the ravenous Hawkers fixed at watch  
for prey

Storm and calm behold the Longstone's towering  
signal shine

Now as when that labouring night brought forth a  
shuddering day.

Now as then, though like the hounds of storm against  
her snarling

All the clamorous years between us storm down  
many a fame,

As our sires beheld before us we behold Grace  
Darling

Crowned and throned our queen, and as they hailed  
we hail her name.

Nay, not ours alone, her kinsfolk born, though  
chiefliest ours,

East and west and south acclaim her queen of  
England's maids,

Star more sweet than all their stars and flower than  
all their flowers,

Higher in heaven and earth than star than sets or  
flower that fades.

How should land or sea that nurtured her forget, or  
love



Hold not fast her fame for us while aught is borne  
in mind ?

Land and sea beneath us, sun and moon and stars  
above,

Bear the bright soul witness, seen of all but souls  
born blind.

Stars and moon and sun may wax and wane, subside  
and rise,

Age on age as flake on flake of showering snows be  
shed :

Not till earth be sunless, not till death strike blind  
the skies,

May the deathless love that waits on deathless  
deeds be dead.

Years on years have withered since beside the hearth  
once thine

I, too young to have seen thee, touched thy father's  
hallowed hand :

Thee and him shall all men see for ever, stars that  
shine

While the sea that spared thee girds and glorifies  
the land.



## LOCH TORRIDON

To E. H.

THE dawn of night more fair than morning rose,  
 Stars hurrying forth on stars, as snows on snows  
 Haste when the wind and winter bid them speed.  
 Vague miles of moorland road behind us lay  
 Scarce traversed ere the day  
 Sank, and the sun forsook us at our need,  
 Belated. Where we thought to have rested, rest  
 Was none ; for soft Maree's dim quivering breast,  
 Bound round with gracious inland girth of green  
 And fearless of the wild wave-wandering West,  
 Shone shelterless for strangers ; and unseen  
 The goal before us lay  
 Of all our blithe and strange and strenuous day.

For when the north'ring road faced westward—when  
 The dark sharp sudden gorge dropped seaward—  
     then,  
 Beneath the stars, between the steeps, the track  
 We followed, lighted not of moon or sun,  
 And plunging whither none

Might guess, while heaven and earth were hoar and black,

Seemed even the dim still pass whence none turns back :

And through the twilight leftward of the way,  
And down the dark, with many a laugh and leap,  
The light blithe hill-streams shone from scaur to steep

In glittering pride of play ;

And ever while the night grew great and deep

We felt but saw not what the hills would keep

Sacred awhile from sense of moon or star ;

And full and far

Beneath us, sweet and strange as heaven may be,

The sea.

The very sea : no mountain-moulded lake  
Whose fluctuant shapeliness is fain to take  
Shape from the steadfast shore that rules it round,  
And only from the storms a casual sound :  
The sea, that harbours in her heart sublime  
The supreme heart of music deep as time,  
And in her spirit strong  
The spirit of all imaginable song.

Not a whisper or lisp from the waters : the skies  
were not silenter. Peace

Was between them ; a passionless rapture of respite  
as soft as release.

Not a sound, but a sense that possessed and per-  
vaded with patient delight

The soul and the body, clothed round with the com-  
fort of limitless night.

Night infinite, living, adorable, loved of the land and  
the sea :

Night, mother of mercies, who saith to the spirits in  
prison, Be free.

And softer than dewfall, and kindlier than starlight,  
and keener than wine,

Came round us the fragrance of waters, the life of  
the breath of the brine.

We saw not, we heard not, the face or the voice of  
the waters : we knew

By the darkling delight of the wind as the sense of  
the sea in it grew,

By the pulse of the darkness about us enkindled and  
quicken'd, that here,

Unseen and unheard of us, surely the goa! we had  
faith in was near.

A silence diviner than music, a darkness diviner than  
light,

Fulfilled as from heaven with a measureless comfort  
the measure of night.

But never a roof for shelter

And never a sign for guide

Rose doubtful or visible : only

And hardly and gladly we heard

The soft waves whisper and welter,

Subdued, and allured to subside,

By the mild night's magic : the lonely

Sweet silence was soothed, not stirred,

By the noiseless noise of the gleaming

Glad ripples, that played and sighed,

Kissed, laughed, recoiled, and relented,

Whispered, flickered, and fled.

No season was this for dreaming  
How oft, with a stormier tide,  
Had the wrath of the winds been vented  
On sons of the tribes long dead :  
The tribes whom time, and the changes  
Of things, and the stress of doom,  
Have erased and effaced ; forgotten  
As wrecks or weeds of the shore  
In sight of the stern hill-ranges  
That hardly may change their gloom  
When the fruits of the years wax rotten  
And the seed of them springs no more.  
For the dim strait footway dividing  
The waters that breathed below  
Led safe to the kindest of shelters  
That ever awoke into light :  
And still in remembrance abiding  
Broods over the stars that glow  
And the water that eddies and welters  
The passionate peace of the night.

All night long, in the world of sleep,  
Skies and waters were soft and deep :  
Shadow clothed them, and silence made  
Soundless music of dream and shade :  
All above us, the livelong night,  
Shadow, kindled with sense of light ;  
All around us, the brief night long,  
Silence, laden with sense of song.  
Stars and mountains without, we knew,  
Watched and waited, the soft night through :  
All unseen, but divined and dear,  
Thrilled the touch of the sea's breath near :

All unheard, but alive like sound,  
Throbb'd the sense of the sea's life round :  
Round us, near us, in depth and height,  
Soft as darkness and keen as light.

And the dawn leapt in at my casement : and there,  
as I rose, at my feet  
No waves of the landlocked waters, no lake sub-  
missive and sweet,  
Soft slave of the lordly seasons, whose breath may  
loose it or freeze ;  
But to left and to right and ahead was the ripple  
whose pulse is the sea's.  
From the gorge we had travelled by starlight the  
sunrise, winged and aflame,  
Shone large on the live wide wavelets that shuddered  
with joy as it came ;  
As it came and caressed and possessed them, till  
panting and laughing with light  
From mountain to mountain the water was kindled  
and stung to delight.  
And the grey gaunt heights that embraced and con-  
strained and compelled it were glad,  
And the rampart of rock, stark naked, that thwarted  
and barred it, was clad  
With a stern grey splendour of sunrise : and scarce  
had I sprung to the sea  
When the dawn and the water were wedded, the hills  
and the sky set free.  
The chain of the night was broken : the waves that  
embraced me and smiled  
And flickered and fawned in the sunlight, alive, un-  
afraid, undefiled,

Were sweeter to swim in than air, though fulfilled  
with the mounting morn,  
Could be for the birds whose triumph rejoiced that a  
day was born.

And a day was arisen indeed for us. Years and the  
changes of years  
Clothed round with their joys and their sorrows, and  
dead as their hopes and their fears,  
Lie noteless and nameless, unlit by remembrance or  
record of days  
Worth wonder or memory, or cursing or blessing, or  
passion or praise,  
Between us who live and forget not, but yearn with  
delight in it yet,  
And the day we forget not, and never may live and  
may think to forget.  
And the years that were kindlier and fairer, and  
kindled with pleasures as keen,  
Have eclipsed not with lights or with shadows the  
light on the face of it seen.  
For softly and surely, as nearer the boat that we  
gazed from drew,  
The face of the precipice opened and bade us as birds  
pass through,  
And the bark shot sheer to the sea through the strait  
of the sharp steep cleft,  
The portal that opens with imminent rampires to  
right and to left,  
Sublime as the sky they darken and strange as a  
spell-struck dream,  
On the world unconfined of the mountains, the reign  
of the sea supreme,



The kingdom of westward waters, wherein when we  
swam we knew  
The waves that we clove were boundless, the wind  
on our brows that blew  
Had swept no land and no lake, and had warred not  
on tower or on tree,  
But came on us hard out of heaven, and alive with  
the soul of the sea.



## THE PALACE OF PAN

INSCRIBED TO MY MOTHER

SEPTEMBER, all glorious with gold, as a king  
 In the radiance of triumph attired,  
 Outlightening the summer, outsweetening the spring,  
 Broods wide on the woodlands with limitless wing,  
 A presence of all men desired.

Far eastward and westward the sun-coloured lands  
 Smile warm as the light on them smiles ;  
 And statelier than temples upbuilt with hands,  
 Tall column by column, the sanctuary stands  
 Of the pine-forest's infinite aisles.

Mute worship, too fervent for praise or for prayer,  
 Possesses the spirit with peace,  
 Fulfilled with the breath of the luminous air,  
 The fragrance, the silence, the shadows as fair  
 As the rays that recede or increase.

Ridged pillars that redden aloft and aloof,  
 With never a branch for a nest,  
 Sustain the sublime indivisible roof,  
 To the storm and the sun in his majesty proof,  
 And awful as waters at rest.

Man's hand hath not measured the height of them ;  
thought

May measure not, awe may not know ;  
In its shadow the woofs of the woodland are  
wrought ;  
As a bird is the sun in the toils of them caught,  
And the flakes of it scattered as snow.

As the shreds of a plumage of gold on the ground  
The sun-flakes by multitudes lie,  
Shed loose as the petals of roses discrowned  
On the floors of the forest engilt and embrowned  
And reddened afar and anigh.

Dim centuries with darkling inscrutable hands  
Have reared and secluded the shrine  
For gods that we know not, and kindled as brands  
On the altar the years that are dust, and their sands  
Time's glass has forgotten for sign.

A temple whose transepts are measured by miles,  
Whose chancel has morning for priest,  
Whose floor-work the foot of no spoiler defiles,  
Whose musical silence no music beguiles,  
No festivals limit its feast.

The noon's ministration, the night's and the dawn's,  
Conceals not, reveals not for man,  
On the slopes of the herbless and blossomless lawns,  
Some track of a nymph's or some trail of a faun's  
To the place of the slumber of Pan.

Thought, kindled and quickened by worship and  
wonder  
To rapture too sacred for fear

On the ways that unite or divide them in sunder,  
Alone may discern if about them or under  
Be token or trace of him here.

With passionate awe that is deeper than panic  
The spirit subdued and unshaken  
Takes heed of the godhead terrene and Titanic  
Whose footfall is felt on the breach of volcanic  
Sharp steeps that their fire has forsaken.

By a spell more serene than the dim necromantic  
Dead charms of the past and the night,  
Or the terror that lurked in the noon to make frantic  
Where Etna takes shape from the limbs of gigantic  
Dead gods disanointed of might,

The spirit made one with the spirit whose breath  
Makes noon in the woodland sublime  
Abides as entranced in a presence that saith  
Things loftier than life and serener than death,  
Triumphant and silent as time.

PINE RIDGE : *September* 1893.

## A YEAR'S CAROLS

## JANUARY

HAIL, January, that bearest here  
On snowbright breasts the babe-faced year  
That weeps and trembles to be born.  
Hail, maid and mother, strong and bright,  
Hooded and cloaked and shod with white,  
Whose eyes are stars that match the morn.  
Thy forehead braves the storm's bent bow,  
Thy feet enkindle stars of snow.

## FEBRUARY

Wan February with weeping cheer,  
Whose cold hand guides the youngling year  
Down misty roads of mire and rime,  
Before thy pale and fitful face  
The shrill wind shifts the clouds apace  
Through skies the morning scarce may climb.  
Thine eyes are thick with heavy tears,  
But lit with hopes that light the year's

## MARCH

Hail, happy March, whose foot on earth  
Rings as the blast of martial mirth

When trumpets fire men's hearts for fray.  
No race of wild things winged or finned  
May match the might that wings thy wind

Through air and sea, through scud and spray.  
Strong joy and thou were powers twin-born  
Of tempest and the towering morn.

## APRIL

Crowned April, king whose kiss bade earth  
Bring forth to time her lordliest birth

When Shakespeare from thy lips drew breath  
And laughed to hold in one soft hand  
A spell that bade the world's wheel stand,

And power on life, and power on death,  
With quiring suns and sunbright showers  
Praise him, the flower of all thy flowers.

## MAY

Hail, May, whose bark puts forth full-sailed  
For summer ; May, whom Chaucer hailed

With all his happy might of heart,  
And gave thy rosebright daisy-tips  
Strange fragrance from his amorous lips

That still thine own breath seems to part  
And sweeten till each word they say  
Is even a flower of flowering May.

## JUNE

Strong June, superb, serene, elate  
With conscience of thy sovereign state  
Untouched of thunder, though the storm  
Scathe here and there thy shuddering skies  
And bid its lightning cross thine eyes  
With fire, thy golden hours inform  
Earth and the souls of men with life  
That brings forth peace from shining strife.

## JULY

Hail, proud July, whose fervent mouth  
Bids even be morn and north be south  
By grace and gospel of thy word,  
Whence all the splendour of the sea  
Lies breathless with delight in thee  
And marvel at the music heard  
From the ardent silent lips of noon  
And midnight's rapturous plenilune.

## AUGUST

Great August, lord of golden lands,  
Whose lordly joy through seas and strands  
And all the red-ripe heart of earth  
Strikes passion deep as life, and stills  
The folded vales and folding hills  
With gladness too divine for mirth,  
The gracious glories of thine eyes  
Make night a noon where darkness dies.



## SEPTEMBER

Hail, kind September, friend whose grace  
Renews the bland year's bounteous face  
With largess given of corn and wine  
Through many a land that laughs with love  
Of thee and all the heaven above,  
More fruitful found than all save thine  
Whose skies fulfil with strenuous cheer  
The fervent fields that knew thee near.

## OCTOBER

October of the tawny crown,  
Whose heavy-laden hands drop down  
Blessing, the bounties of thy breath  
And mildness of thy mellowing might  
Fill earth and heaven with love and light  
Too sweet for fear to dream of death  
Or memory, while thy joy lives yet,  
To know what joy would fain forget.

## NOVEMBER

Hail, soft November, though thy pale  
Sad smile rebuke the words that hail  
Thy sorrow with no sorrowing words  
Or gratulate thy grief with song  
Less bitter than the winds that wrong  
Thy withering woodlands, where the birds  
Keep hardly heart to sing or see  
How fair thy faint wan face may be.



## DECEMBER

December, thou whose hallowing hands  
On shuddering seas and hardening lands  
Set as a sacramental sign  
The seal of Christmas felt on earth  
As witness toward a new year's birth  
Whose promise makes thy death divine,  
The crowning joy that comes of thee  
Makes glad all grief on land or sea.

## ENGLAND: AN ODE

## I

SEA and strand, and a lordlier land than sea-tides  
 rolling and rising sun  
 Clasp and lighten in climes that brighten with day  
 when day that was here is done,  
 Call aloud on their children, proud with trust that  
 future and past are one.

Far and near from the swan's nest here the storm-  
 birds bred of her fair white breast,  
 Sons whose home was the sea-wave's foam, have  
 borne the fame of her east and west ;  
 North and south has the storm-wind's mouth rung  
 praise of England and England's quest.

Fame, wherever her flag flew, never forbore to fly  
 with an equal wing :  
 France and Spain with their warrior train bowed  
 down before her as thrall to king ;  
 India knelt at her feet, and felt her sway more fruit-  
 ful of life than spring.

Darkness round them as iron bound fell off from  
 races of elder name,

Slain at sight of her eyes, whose light bids freedom  
lighten and burn as flame ;  
Night endures not the touch that cures of kingship  
tyrants, and slaves of shame.

All the terror of time, where error and fear were lords  
of a world of slaves,  
Age on age in resurgent rage and anguish darkening  
as waves on waves,  
Fell or fled from a face that shed such grace as  
quicken the dust of graves.

Things of night at her glance took flight : the  
strengths of darkness recoiled and sank :  
Sank the fires of the murderous pyres whereon wild  
agony writhed and shrank :  
Rose the light of the reign of right from gulfs of  
years that the darkness drank.

Yet the might of her wings in flight, whence glory  
lightens and music rings,  
Loud and bright as the dawn's, shall smite and still  
the discord of evil things,  
Yet not slain by her radiant reign, but darkened now  
by her sail-stretched wings.

## II

Music made of change and conquest, glory born of  
evil slain,  
Stilled the discord, slew the darkness, bade the lights  
of tempest wane,  
Where the deathless dawn of England rose in sign  
that right should reign.

Mercy, where the tiger wallowed mad and blind with  
blood and lust,  
Justice, where the jackal yelped and fed, and slaves  
allowed it just,  
Rose as England's light on Asia rose, and smote  
them down to dust.

Justice bright as mercy, mercy girt by justice with  
her sword,  
Smote and saved and raised and ruined, till the  
tyrant-ridden horde  
Saw the lightning fade from heaven and knew the sun  
for God and lord.

Where the footfall sounds of England, where the  
smile of England shines,  
Rings the tread and laughs the face of freedom, fair  
as hope divines  
Days to be, more brave than ours and lit by lordlier  
stars for signs.

All our past acclaims our future : Shakespeare's  
voice and Nelson's hand,  
Milton's faith and Wordsworth's trust in this our  
chosen and chainless land,  
Bear us witness : come the world against her,  
England yet shall stand.

Earth and sea bear England witness if he lied who  
said it ; he  
Whom the winds that ward her, waves that clasp,  
and herb and flower and tree  
Fed with English dews and sunbeams, hail as more  
than man may be.

No man ever spake as he that bade our England be  
but true,  
Keep but faith with England fast and firm, and none  
should bid her rue ;  
None may speak as he : but all may know the sign  
that Shakespeare knew.

## III

From the springs of the dawn, from the depths of the  
noon, from the heights of the night that shine,  
Hope, faith, and remembrance of glory that found  
but in England her throne and her shrine,  
Speak louder than song may proclaim them, that here  
is the seal of them set for a sign.

And loud as the sea's voice thunders applause of the  
land that is one with the sea  
Speaks Time in the ear of the people that never at  
heart was not inly free  
The word of command that assures us of life, if we  
will but that life shall be ;

If the race that is first of the races of men who behold  
unashamed the sun  
Stand fast and forget not the sign that is given of  
the years and the wars that are done,  
The token that all who are born of its blood should  
in heart as in blood be one.

The word of remembrance that lightens as fire from  
the steep of the storm-lit past

Bids only the faith of our fathers endure in us, firm  
as they held it fast :

That the glory which was from the first upon England  
alone may endure to the last.

That the love and the hate may change not, the faith  
may not fade, nor the wrath nor scorn,

That shines for her sons and that burns for her foe-  
men as fire of the night or the morn :

That the births of her womb may forget not the sign  
of the glory wherein they were born.

A light that is more than the sunlight, an air that is  
brighter than morning's breath,

Clothes England about as the strong sea clasps her,  
and answers the word that it saith ;

The word that assures her of life if she change not,  
and choose not the ways of death.

Change darkens and lightens around her, alternate  
in hope and in fear to be :

Hope knows not if fear speak truth, nor fear whether  
hope be not blind as she :

But the sun is in heaven that beholds her immortal,  
and girdled with life by the sea.



## ETON : AN ODE

FOR THE FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE COLLEGE

### I

FOUR hundred summers and fifty have shone on the  
meadows of Thames and died  
Since Eton arose in an age that was darkness, and  
shone by his radiant side  
As a star that the spell of a wise man's word bade  
live and ascend and abide.

And ever as time's flow brightened, a river more dark  
than the storm-clothed sea,  
And age upon age rose fairer and larger in promise of  
hope set free,  
With England Eton her child kept pace as a fostress  
of men to be.

And ever as earth waxed wiser, and softer the beat-  
ing of time's wide wings,  
Since fate fell dark on her father, most hapless and  
gentlest of star-crossed kings,  
Her praise has increased as the chant of the dawn  
that the choir of the noon outsings.



## II

Storm and cloud in the skies were loud, and lightning  
mocked at the blind sun's light ;  
War and woe on the land below shed heavier shadow  
than falls from night ;  
Dark was earth at her dawn of birth as here her  
record of praise is bright.

Clear and fair through her morning air the light first  
laugh of the sunlit stage  
Rose and rang as a fount that sprang from depths  
yet dark with a spent storm's rage,  
Loud and glad as a boy's, and bade the sunrise open  
on Shakespeare's age.

Lords of state and of war, whom fate found strong in  
battle, in counsel strong,  
Here, ere fate had approved them great, abode their  
season, and thought not long :  
Here too first was the lark's note nursed that filled  
and flooded the skies with song.

## III

Shelley, lyric lord of England's lordliest singers, here  
first heard  
Ring from lips of poets crowned and dead the Pro-  
methean word  
Whence his soul took fire, and power to outsoar the  
sunward-soaring bird.

Still the reaches of the river, still the light on field  
and hill,  
Still the memories held aloft as lamps for hope's  
young fire to fill,  
Shine, and while the light of England lives shall  
shine for England still.

When four hundred more and fifty years have risen  
and shone and set,  
Bright with names that men remember, loud with  
names that men forget,  
Haply here shall Eton's record be what England  
finds it yet.

## THE UNION

### I

THREE in one, but one in three,  
 God, who girt her with the sea,  
 Bade our Commonweal to be :  
     Nought, if now not one.  
 Though fraud and fear would sever  
 The bond assured for ever,  
 Their shameful strength shall never  
     Undo what heaven has done.

### II

South and North and West and East  
 Watch the ravens flock to feast,  
 Dense as round some death-struck beast,  
     Black as night is black.  
 Stand fast as faith together  
 In stress of treacherous weather  
 When hounds and wolves break tether  
     And Treason guides the pack.

### III

Lovelier than thy seas are strong,  
 Glorious Ireland, sword and song  
 Gird and crown thee : none may wrong,  
     Save thy sons alone.

The sea that laughs around us  
Hath sundered not but bound us :  
The sun's first rising found us  
Throned on its equal throne.

## IV

North and South and East and West,  
All true hearts that wish thee best  
Beat one tune and own one quest,  
Staunch and sure as steel.  
God guard from dark disunion  
Our threefold State's communion,  
God save the loyal Union,  
The royal Commonweal !

## EAST TO WEST

SUNSET smiles on sunrise : east and west are one,  
 Face to face in heaven before the sovereign sun.  
 From the springs of the dawn everlasting a glory  
     renews and transfigures the west,  
 From the depths of the sunset a light as of morning  
     enkindles the broad sea's breast,  
 And the lands and the skies and the waters are glad  
     of the day's and the night's work done.

Child of dawn, and regent on the world-wide sea,  
 England smiles on Europe, fair as dawn and free.  
 Not the waters that gird her are purer, nor mightier  
     the winds that her waters know.  
 But America, daughter and sister of England, is  
     praised of them, far as they flow :  
 Atlantic responds to Pacific the praise of her days  
     that have been and shall be.

So from England westward let the watchword fly,  
 So for England eastward let the seas reply ;  
 Praise, honour, and love everlasting be sent on the  
     wind's wings, westward and east,  
 That the pride of the past and the pride of the future  
     may mingle as friends at feast,  
 And the sons of the lords of the world-wide seas be  
     one till the world's life die.

## INSCRIPTIONS

## FOR THE FOUR SIDES OF A PEDESTAL

## I

MARLOWE, the father of the sons of song

Whose praise is England's crowning praise, above  
All glories else that crown her, sweet and strong

As England, clothed with light and fire of love,  
And girt with might of passion, thought, and trust,  
Stands here in spirit, sleeps not here in dust.

## II

Marlowe, a star too sovereign, too superb,

To fade when heaven took fire from Shakespeare's  
light,

A soul that knew but song's triumphal curb

And love's triumphant bondage, holds of right  
His pride of place, who first in place and time  
Made England's voice as England's heart sublime.

## III

Marlowe bade England live in living song :

The light he lifted up lit Shakespeare's way :

He spake, and life sprang forth in music, strong

As fire or lightning, sweet as dawn of day.

Song was a dream where day took night to wife :

"Let there be life," he said : and there was life.

## IV

Marlowe of all our fathers first beheld  
Beyond the tidal ebb and flow of things  
The tideless depth and height of souls, impelled  
By thought or passion, borne on waves or wings,  
Beyond all flight or sight but song's : and he  
First gave our song a sound that matched our sea.



## ON THE DEATH OF RICHARD BURTON

NIGHT or light is it now, wherein  
Sleeps, shut out from the wild world's din,  
    Wakes, alive with a life more clear,  
One who found not on earth his kin?

Sleep were sweet for awhile, were dear  
Surely to souls that were heartless here,  
    Souls that faltered and flagged and fell,  
Soft of spirit and faint of cheer.

A living soul that had strength to quell  
Hope the spectre and fear the spell,  
    Clear-eyed, content with a scorn sublime  
And a faith superb, can it fare not well?

Life, the shadow of wide-winged time,  
Cast from the wings that change as they climb,  
    Life may vanish in death, and seem  
Less than the promise of last year's prime.

But not for us is the past a dream  
Wherefrom, as light from a clouded stream,  
    Faith fades and shivers and ebbs away,  
Faint as the moon if the sundawn gleam.

Faith, whose eyes in the low last ray  
 Watch the fire that renews the day,  
     Faith which lives in the living past,  
 Rock-rooted, swerves not as weeds that sway.

As trees that stand in the storm-wind fast  
 She stands, unsmitten of death's keen blast,  
     With strong remembrance of sunbright spring  
 Alive at heart to the lifeless last.

Night, she knows, may in no wise cling  
 To a soul that sinks not and droops not wing,  
     A sun that sets not in death's false night  
 Whose kingdom finds him not thrall but king.

Souls there are that for soul's affright  
 Bow down and cower in the sun's glad sight,  
     Clothed round with faith that is one with fear,  
 And dark with doubt of the live world's light.

But him we hailed from afar or near  
 As boldest born of the bravest here  
     And loved as brightest of souls that eyed  
 Life, time, and death with unchangeful cheer,

A wider soul than the world was wide,  
 Whose praise made love of him one with pride,  
     What part has death or has time in him,  
 Who rode life's lists as a god might ride?

While England sees not her old praise dim,  
 While still her stars through the world's night swim,  
     A fame outshining her Raleigh's fame,  
 A light that lightens her loud sea's rim,

Shall shine and sound as her sons proclaim  
The pride that kindles at Burton's name.

And joy shall exalt their pride to be  
The same in birth if in soul the same.

But we that yearn for a friend's face—we  
Who lack the light that on earth was he—

Mourn, though the light be a quenchless flame  
That shines as dawn on a tideless sea.

## ELEGY

1869-1891

AUVERGNE, Auvergne, O wild and woful land,  
 O glorious land and gracious, white as gleam  
 The stairs of heaven, black as a flameless brand,  
 Strange even as life, and stranger than a dream,

Could earth remember man, whose eyes made bright  
 The splendour of her beauty, lit by day  
 Or soothed and softened and redeemed by night,  
 Wouldst thou not know what light has passed  
 away?

Wouldst thou not know whom England, whom the  
 world,  
 Mourns? For the world whose wildest ways he trod,  
 And smiled their dangers down that coiled and curled  
 Against him, knows him now less man than god.

Our demigod of daring, keenest-eyed  
 To read and deepest read in earth's dim things,  
 A spirit now whose body of death has died  
 And left it mightier yet in eyes and wings,

The sovereign seeker of the world, who now  
Hath sought what world the light of death may  
show,

Hailed once with me the crowns that load thy brow,  
Crag dark as midnight, columns bright as snow.

Thy steep small Siena, splendid and content  
As shines the mightier city's Tuscan pride  
Which here its face reflects in radiance, pent  
By narrower bounds from towering side to side,

Set fast between the ridged and foamless waves  
Of earth more fierce and fluctuant than the sea,  
The fearless town of towers that hails and braves  
The heights that gird, the sun that brands Le Puy ;

The huddled churches clinging on the cliffs  
As birds alighting might for storm's sake cling,  
Moored to the rocks as tempest-harried skiffs  
To perilous refuge from the loud wind's wing ;

The stairs on stairs that wind and change and climb  
Even up to the utmost crag's edge curved and curled,  
More bright than vision, more than faith sublime,  
Strange as the light and darkness of the world ;

Strange as are night and morning, stars and sun,  
And washed from west and east by day's deep tide.  
Shine yet less fair, when all their heights are won,  
Than sundawn shows thy pillared mountain-side.

Even so the dawn of death, whose light makes dim  
The starry fires that life sees rise and set,  
Shows higher than here he shone before us him  
Whom faith forgets not, nor shall fame forget.

Even so those else unfooted heights we clomb  
Through scudding mist and eddying whirls of cloud,  
Blind as a pilot beaten blind with foam,  
And shrouded as a corpse with storm's grey shroud,

Foot following foot along the sheer strait ledge  
Where space was none to bear the wild goat's feet  
Till blind we sat on the outer footless edge  
Where darkling death seemed fain to share the  
seat,

The abyss before us, viewless even as time's,  
The abyss to left of us, the abyss to right,  
Bid thought now dream how high the freed soul  
climbs  
That death sets free from change of day and night.

The might of raging mist and wind whose wrath  
Shut from our eyes the narrowing rock we trod,  
The wondrous world it darkened, made our path  
Like theirs who take the shadow of death for God.

Yet eastward, veiled in vapour white as snow,  
The grim black herbless heights that scorn the  
sun  
And mock the face of morning rose to show  
The work of earth-born fire and earthquake done.

And half the world was haggard night, wherein  
We strove our blind way through : but far above  
Was light that watched the wild mists whirl and  
spin,  
And far beneath a land worth light and love.



Deep down the Valley of the Curse, undaunted  
By shadow and whisper of winds with sins for  
wings  
And ghosts of crime wherethrough the heights live  
haunted  
By present sense of past and monstrous things,

The glimmering water holds its gracious way  
Full forth, and keeps one happier hand's-breadth  
green  
Of all that storm-scathed world whereon the sway  
Sits dark as death of deadlier things unseen.

But on the soundless and the viewless river  
That bears through night perchance again to day  
The dead whom death and twin-born fame deliver  
From life that dies, and time's inveterate sway,

No shadow save of falsehood and of fear  
That brands the future with the past, and bids  
The spirit wither and the soul grow sere,  
Hovers or hangs to cloud life's opening lids,

If life have eyes to lift again and see,  
Beyond the bounds of sensual sight or breath,  
What life incognisable of ours may be  
That turns our light to darkness deep as death.

Priests and the soulless serfs of priests may swarm  
With vulturous acclamation, loud in lies,  
About his dust while yet his dust is warm  
Who mocked as sunlight mocks their base blind  
eyes,



Their godless ghost of godhead, false and foul  
As fear his dam or hell his throne : but we,  
Scarce hearing, heed no carrion church-wolf's howl :  
The corpse be theirs to mock ; the soul is free.

Free as ere yet its earthly day was done  
It lived above the coil about us curled :  
A soul whose eyes were keener than the sun,  
A soul whose wings were wider than the world.

We, sons of east and west, ringed round with  
dreams,  
Bound fast with visions, girt about with fears,  
Live, trust, and think by chance, while shadow  
seems  
Light, and the wind that wrecks a hand that  
steers.

He, whose full soul held east and west in poise,  
Weighed man with man, and creed of man's with  
creed,  
And age with age, their triumphs and their toys,  
And found what faith may read not and may read.

Scorn deep and strong as death and life, that lit  
With fire the smile at lies and dreams outworn  
Wherewith he smote them, showed sublime in it  
The splendour and the steadfastness of scorn.

What loftier heaven, what lordlier air, what space  
Illimitable, insuperable, infinite,  
Now to that strong-winged soul yields ampler place  
Than passing darkness yields to passing light,

No dream, no faith can tell us : hope and fear,  
Whose tongues were loud of old as children's, now  
From babbling fall to silence : change is here,  
And death ; dark furrows drawn by time's dark  
plough.

Still sunward here on earth its flight was bent,  
Even since the man within the child began  
To yearn and kindle with superb intent  
And trust in time to magnify the man.

Still toward the old garden of the Sun, whose fruit  
The honey-heavy lips of Sophocles  
Desired and sang, wherein the unwithering root  
Sprang of all growths that thought brings forth  
and sees

Incarnate, bright with bloom or dense with leaf  
Far-shadowing, deep as depth of dawn or night :  
And all were parcel of the garnered sheaf  
His strenuous spirit bound and stored aright.

And eastward now, and ever toward the dawn,  
If death's deep veil by life's bright hand be rent,  
We see, as through the shadow of death withdrawn,  
The imperious soul's indomitable ascent.

But not the soul whose labour knew not end—  
But not the swordsman's hand, the crested head—  
The royal heart we mourn, the faultless friend,  
Burton—a name that lives till fame be dead.

# A SEQUENCE OF SONNETS ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT BROWNING

## I

THE clearest eyes in all the world they read  
With sense more keen and spirit of sight more  
true

Than burns and thrills in sunrise, when the dew  
Flames, and absorbs the glory round it shed,  
As they the light of ages quick and dead,

• Closed now, forsake us : yet the shaft that slew  
Can slay not one of all the works we knew,  
Nor death discrown that many-laurelled head.

The works of words whose life seems lightning  
wrought,

And moulded of unconquerable thought,

And quickened with imperishable flame,  
Stand fast and shine and smile, assured that nought  
May fade of all their myriad-moulded fame,  
Nor England's memory clasp not Browning's  
name.

*December 13, 1889.*

II

Death, what hast thou to do with one for whom  
 Time is not lord, but servant? What least part  
 Of all the fire that fed his living heart,  
 Of all the light more keen than sundawn's bloom  
 That lit and led his spirit, strong as doom  
 And bright as hope, can aught thy breath may dart  
 Quench? Nay, thou knowest he knew thee what  
 thou art,  
 A shadow born of terror's barren womb,  
 That brings not forth save shadows. What art thou,  
 To dream, albeit thou breathe upon his brow,  
 That power on him is given thee,—that thy breath  
 Can make him less than love acclaims him now,  
 And hears all time sound back the word it saith?  
 What part hast thou then in his glory, Death?

III

A graceless doom it seems that bids us grieve :  
 Venice and winter, hand in deadly hand,  
 Have slain the lover of her sunbright strand  
 And singer of a stormbright Christmas Eve.  
 A graceless guerdon we that loved receive  
 For all our love, from that the dearest land  
 Love worshipped ever. Blithe and soft and bland,  
 Too fair for storm to scathe or fire to cleave,  
 Shone on our dreams and memories evermore  
 The domes, the towers, the mountains and the shore  
 That gird or guard thee, Venice : cold and black  
 Seems now the face we loved as he of yore.  
 We have given thee love—no stint, no stay, no lack :  
 What gift, what gift is this thou hast given us back ?

## IV

But he—to him, who knows what gift is thine,  
 Death? Hardly may we think or hope, when we  
 Pass likewise thither where to-night is he,  
 Beyond the irremeable outer seas that shine  
 And darken round such dreams as half divine  
 Some sunlit harbour in that starless sea  
 Where gleams no ship to windward or to lee,  
 To read with him the secret of thy shrine.

There too, as here, may song, delight, and love,  
 The nightingale, the sea-bird, and the dove,  
 Fulfil with joy the splendour of the sky  
 Till all beneath wax bright as all above :  
 But none of all that search the heavens, and try  
 The sun, may match the sovereign eagle's eye.

*December 14.*

## V

Among the wondrous ways of men and time  
 He went as one that ever found and sought  
 And bore in hand the lamplike spirit of thought  
 To illumine with instance of its fire sublime  
 The dusk of many a cloudlike age and clime.  
 No spirit in shape of light and darkness wrought;  
 No faith, no fear, no dream, no rapture, nought  
 That blooms in wisdom, nought that burns in crime,  
 No virtue girt and armed and helmed with light,  
 No love more lovely than the snows are white,  
 No serpent sleeping in some dead soul's tomb,  
 No song-bird singing from some live soul's height,  
 But he might hear, interpret, or illumine  
 With sense invasive as the dawn of doom.



VI

What secret thing of splendour or of shade  
 Surmised in all those wandering ways wherein  
 Man, led of love and life and death and sin,  
 Strays, climbs, or cowers, allured, absorbed, afraid,  
 Might not the strong and sunlike sense invade  
 Of that full soul that had for aim to win  
 Light, silent over time's dark toil and din,  
 Life, at whose touch death fades as dead things fade?  
 O spirit of man, what mystery moves in thee  
 That he might know not of in spirit, and see  
 The heart within the heart that seems to strive,  
 The life within the life that seems to be,  
 And hear, through all thy storms that whirl and  
 drive,  
 The living sound of all men's souls alive?

VII

He held no dream worth waking : so he said,  
 He who stands now on death's triumphal steep,  
 Awakened out of life wherein we sleep  
 And dream of what he knows and sees, being dead.  
 But never death for him was dark or dread :  
 "Look forth" he bade the soul, and fear not. Weep,  
 All ye that trust not in his truth, and keep  
 Vain memory's vision of a vanished head  
 As all that lives of all that once was he  
 Save that which lightens from his word : but we,  
 Who, seeing the sunset-coloured waters roll,  
 Yet know the sun subdued not of the sea,  
 Nor weep nor doubt that still the spirit is whole,  
 And life and death but shadows of the soul.

*December 15.*

## SUNSET AND MOONRISE

NEW YEAR'S EVE, 1889

ALL the west, whereon the sunset sealed the dead  
year's glorious grave

Fast with seals of light and fire and cloud that  
light and fire illumine,

Glowes at heart and kindles earth and heaven with  
joyous blush and bloom,

Warm and wide as life, and glad of death that only  
slays to save.

As a tide-reconquered sea-rock lies aflush with the  
influent wave

Lies the light aflush with darkness, lapped about  
by lustrous gloom,

Even as life with death, and fame with time, and  
memory with the tomb

Where a dead man hath for vassals Fame the serf  
and Time the slave.

Far from earth as heaven, the steadfast light with-  
drawn, superb, suspense,

Burns in dumb divine expansion of illimitable  
flower :



Moonrise whets the shadow's edges keen as noon-  
tide : hence and thence

Glow the presence from us passing, shines and  
passes not the power.

Souls arise whose word remembered is as spirit  
within the sense :

All the hours are theirs of all the seasons : death  
has but his hour.

## BIRTHDAY ODE

AUGUST 6, 1891

## I

LOVE and praise, and a length of days whose shadow  
 cast upon time is light,  
 Days whose sound was a spell shed round from  
 wheeling wings as of doves in flight,  
 Meet in one, that the mounting sun to-day may  
 triumph, and cast out night.

Two years more than the full fourscore lay hallowing  
 hands on a sacred head—  
 Scarce one score of the perfect four uncrowned of  
 fame as they smiled and fled :  
 Still and soft and alive aloft their sunlight stays  
 though the suns be dead.

Ere we were or were thought on, ere the love that  
 gave us to life began,  
 Fame grew strong with his crescent song, to greet  
 the goal of the race they ran,  
 Song with fame, and the lustrous name with years  
 whose changes acclaimed the man.

## II

Soon, ere time in the rounding rhyme of choral seasons  
    had hailed us men,  
We too heard and acclaimed the word whose breath  
    was life upon England then—  
Life more bright than the breathless light of soundless  
    noon in a songless glen.

Ah, the joy of the heartstruck boy whose ear was  
    opened of love to hear !  
Ah, the bliss of the burning kiss of song and spirit,  
    the mounting cheer  
Lit with fire of divine desire and love that knew not  
    if love were fear !

Fear and love as of heaven above and earth enkindled  
    of heaven were one ;  
One white flame, that around his name grew keen and  
    strong as the worldwide sun ;  
Awe made bright with implied delight, as weft with  
    weft of the rainbow spun.

## III

He that fears not the voice he hears and loves shall  
    never have heart to sing :  
All the grace of the sun-god's face that bids the soul  
    as a fountain spring  
Bids the brow that receives it bow, and hail his like-  
    ness on earth as king.

We that knew when the sun's shaft flew beheld and  
worshipped, adored and heard :  
Light rang round it of shining sound, whence all  
men's hearts were subdued and stirred :  
Joy, love, sorrow, the day, the morrow, took life upon  
them in one man's word.

Not for him can the years wax dim, nor downward  
swerve on a darkening way :  
Upward wind they, and leave behind such light as  
lightens the front of May :  
Fair as youth and sublime as truth we find the fame  
that we hail to-day.

## THRENODY

OCTOBER 6, 1892

## I

LIFE, sublime and serene when time had power upon  
 it and ruled its breath,  
 Changed it, bade it be glad or sad, and hear what  
 change in the world's ear saith,  
 Shines more fair in the starrier air whose glory  
 lightens the dusk of death.

Suns that sink on the wan sea's brink, and moons  
 that kindle and flame and fade,  
 Leave more clear for the darkness here the stars that  
 set not and see not shade  
 Rise and rise on the lowlier skies by rule of sunlight  
 and moonlight swayed.

So, when night for his eyes grew bright, his proud  
 head pillowed on Shakespeare's breast,  
 Hand in hand with him, soon to stand where shine  
 the glories that death loves best,  
 Passed the light of his face from sight, and sank  
 sublimely to radiant rest.

## II

Far above us and all our love, beyond all reach of  
its voiceless praise,  
Shines for ever the name that never shall feel the  
shade of the changeful days  
Fall and chill the delight that still sees winter's light  
on it shine like May's.

Strong as death is the dark day's breath whose blast  
has withered the life we see  
Here where light is the child of night, and less than  
visions or dreams are we :  
Strong as death ; but a word, a breath, a dream is  
stronger than death can be.

Strong as truth and superb in youth eternal, fair as  
the sundawn's flame  
Seen when May on her first-born day bids earth exult  
in her radiant name,  
Lives, clothed round with its praise and crowned  
with love that dies not, his love-lit fame.

## III

Fairer far than the morning star, and sweet for us as  
the songs that rang  
Loud through heaven from the choral Seven when all  
the stars of the morning sang,  
Shines the song that we loved so long—since first  
such love in us flamed and sprang.

England glows as a sunlit rose from mead to mountain,  
from sea to sea,  
Bright with love and with pride above all taint of  
sorrow that needs must be,  
Needs must live for an hour, and give its rainbow's  
glory to lawn and lea.

Not through tears shall the new-born years behold  
him, crowned with applause of men,  
Pass at last from a lustrous past to life that lightens  
beyond their ken,  
Glad and dead, and from earthward led to sunward,  
guided of Imogen.



## THE BALLAD OF MELICERTES

IN MEMORY OF THÉODORE DE BANVILLE

DEATH, a light outshining life, bids heaven resume  
 Star by star the souls whose light made earth divine.  
 Death, a night outshining day, sees burn and bloom  
 Flower by flower, and sun by sun, the fames that  
 shine

Deathless, higher than life beheld their sovereign  
 sign.

Dead Simonides of Ceos, late restored,  
 Given again of God, again by man deplored,  
 Shone but yestereve, a glory frail as breath.  
 Frail? But fame's breath quickens, kindles, keeps in  
 ward,  
 Life so sweet as this that dies and casts off death.

Mother's love, and rapture of the sea, whose womb  
 Breeds eternal life of joy that stings like brine,  
 Pride of song, and joy to dare the singer's doom,  
 Sorrow soft as sleep and laughter bright as wine,  
 Flushed and filled with fragrant fire his lyric line.  
 As the sea-shell utters, like a stricken chord,  
 Music uttering all the sea's within it stored,  
 Poet well-beloved, whose praise our sorrow saith,  
 So thy songs retain thy soul, and so record  
 Life so sweet as this that dies and casts off death.

Side by side we mourned at Gautier's golden tomb :  
 Here in spirit now I stand and mourn at thine.  
 Yet no breath of death strikes thence, no shadow of  
 gloom,  
 Only light more bright than gold of the inmost  
 mine,  
 Only steam of incense warm from love's own  
 shrine.  
 Not the darkling stream, the sundering Stygian ford,  
 Not the hour that smites and severs as a sword,  
 Not the night subduing light that perisheth,  
 Smite, subdue, divide from us by doom abhorred,  
 Life so sweet as this that dies and casts off death.

Prince of song more sweet than honey, lyric lord,  
 Not thy France here only mourns a light adored,  
 One whose love-lit fame the world inheriteth.  
 Strangers too, now brethren, hail with heart's accord  
 Life so sweet as this that dies and casts off death.

## AU TOMBEAU DE BANVILLE

LA plus douce des voix qui vibraient sous le ciel  
Se tait : les rossignols ailés pleurent le frère  
Qui s'envole au-dessus de l'âpre et sombre terre,  
Ne lui laissant plus voir que l'être essentiel,

Esprit qui chante et rit, fleur d'une âme sans fiel.  
L'ombre élyséenne, où la nuit n'est que lumière,  
Revoit, tout revêtu de splendeur douce et fière,  
Mélécerte, poète à la bouche de miel.

Dieux exilés, passants célestes de ce monde,  
Dont on entend parfois dans notre nuit profonde  
Vibrer la voix, frémir les ailes, vous savez  
S'il vous aimait, s'il vous pleura, lui dont la vie  
Et le chant rappelaient les vôtres. Recevez  
L'âme de Mélécerte affranchie et ravie.

## LIGHT: AN EPICEDÉ

TO PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON

LOVE will not weep because the seal is broken  
 That sealed upon a life beloved and brief  
 Darkness, and let but song break through for token  
 How deep, too far for even thy song's relief,  
 Slept in thy soul the secret springs of grief.

Thy song may soothe full many a soul hereafter,  
 As tears, if tears will come, dissolve despair ;  
 As here but late, with smile more bright than  
 laughter,  
 Thy sweet strange yearning eyes would seem to  
 bear  
 Witness that joy might cleave the clouds of care.

Two days ago, and love was one with pity  
 When love gave thought wings toward the glim-  
 mering goal  
 Where, as a shrine lit in some darkling city,  
 Shone soft the shrouded image of thy soul :  
 And now thou art healed of life ; thou art healed,  
 and whole.

Yea, two days since, all we that loved thee pitied :

And now with wondering love, with shame of face,  
We think how foolish now, how far unfitted,

Should be from us, toward thee who hast run thy  
race,

Pity—toward thee, who hast won the painless  
place ;

The painless world of death, yet un beholden

Of eyes that dream what light now lightens thine  
And will not weep. Thought, yearning toward those  
olden

Dear hours that sorrow sees and sees not shine,  
Bows tearless down before a flameless shrine :

A flameless altar here of life and sorrow

Quenched and consumed together. These were  
one,

One thing for thee, as night was one with morrow

And utter darkness with the sovereign sun :

And now thou seest life, sorrow, and darkness  
done.

And yet love yearns again to win thee hither ;

Blind love, and loveless, and unworthy thee :

Here where I watch the hours of darkness wither,

Here where mine eyes were glad and sad to see

Thine that could see not mine, though turned on me.

But now, if aught beyond sweet sleep lie hidden,

And sleep be sealed not fast on dead men's sight

For ever, thine hath grace for ours forbidden,

And sees us compassed round with change and  
night :

Yet light like thine is ours, if love be light.

## THRENODY

WATCHING here alone by the fire whereat last year  
 Sat with me the friend that a week since yet was  
     near,

That a week has borne so far and hid so deep,  
 Woe am I that I may not weep,  
 May not yearn to behold him here.

Shame were mine, and little the love I bore him  
     were,

Now to mourn that better he fares than love may  
     fare

Which desires, and would not have indeed, its  
     will,

Would not love him so worse than ill,  
 Would not clothe him again with care.

Yet can love not choose but remember, hearts but  
     ache,

Eyes but darken, only for one vain thought's poor  
     sake,

For the thought that by this hearth's now lonely  
     side

Two fast friends, on the day he died,  
 Looked once more for his hand to take.



Let thy soul forgive them, and pardon heal the sin,  
Though their hearts be heavy to think what then had  
been,

The delight that never while they live may be—  
Love's communion of speech with thee.  
Soul and speech with the soul therein.

O my friend, O brother, a glory veiled and marred !  
Never love made moan for a life more evil-starred.

Was it envy, chance, or chance-compelling fate,  
Whence thy spirit was bruised so late,  
Bowed so heavily, bound so hard ?

Now released, it may be,—if only love might  
know—

Filled and fired with sight, it beholds us blind and  
low

With a pity keener yet, if that may be,  
Even than ever was this that we  
Felt, when love of thee wrought us woe.

None may tell the depths and the heights of life and  
death.

What we may we give thee : a word that sorrow  
saith,

And that none will heed save sorrow : scarce a  
song.

All we may, who have loved thee long,  
Take : the best we can give is breath.



## A DIRGE

A BELL tolls on in my heart  
 As though in my ears a knell  
 Had ceased for awhile to swell,  
 But the sense of it would not part  
 From the spirit that bears its part  
 In the chime of the soundless bell.

Ah dear dead singer of sorrow,  
 The burden is now not thine  
 That grief bade sound for a sign  
 Through the songs of the night whose morrow  
 Has risen, and I may not borrow  
 A beam from its radiant shrine.

The burden has dropped from thee  
 That grief on thy life bound fast ;  
 The winter is over and past  
 Whose end thou wast fain to see.  
 Shall sorrow not comfort me  
 That is thine no longer—at last ?

Good day, good night, and good morrow,  
Men living and mourning say.  
For thee we could only pray  
That night of the day might borrow  
Such comfort as dreams lend sorrow :  
Death gives thee at last good day.

## A REMINISCENCE

THE rose to the wind has yielded : all its leaves  
 Lie strewn on the graveyard grass, and all their  
 light  
 And colour and fragrance leave our sense and  
 sight

Bereft as a man whom bitter time bereaves  
 Of blossom at once and hope of garnered sheaves,  
 Of April at once and August. Day to night  
 Calls wailing, and life to death, and depth to  
 height,  
 And soul upon soul of man that hears and grieves.

Who knows, though he see the snow-cold blossom  
 shed,

If haply the heart that burned within the rose,  
 The spirit in sense, the life of life be dead ?

If haply the wind that slays with storming snows  
 Be one with the wind that quickens ? Bow thine  
 head,

O Sorrow, and commune with thine heart : who  
 knows ?

## VIA DOLOROSA

THE days of a man are threescore years and ten.

The days of his life were half a man's, whom we  
Lament, and would yet not bid him back, to be  
Partaker of all the woes and ways of men.

Life sent him enough of sorrow : not again

Would anguish of love, beholding him set free,  
Bring back the beloved to suffer life and see  
No light but the fire of grief that scathed him then.

We know not at all : we hope, and do not fear.  
We shall not again behold him, late so near,

Who now from afar above, with eyes alight  
And spirit enkindled, haply toward us here  
Looks down unforgetful yet of days like night  
And love that has yet his sightless face in sight.

*February 15, 1887.*

## I

## TRANSFIGURATION

BUT half a man's days—and his days were nights.

What hearts were ours who loved him, should we  
prayer

That night would yield him back to darkling day,  
Sweet death that soothes, to life that spoils and  
smites ?

For now, perchance, life lovelier than the light's

That shed no comfort on his weary way

Shows him what none may dream to see or say

Ere yet the soul may scale those topless heights

Where death lies dead, and triumph. Haply there

Already may his kindling eyesight find

Faces of friends—no face than his more fair—

And first among them found of all his kind

Milton, with crowns from Eden on his hair,

And eyes that meet a brother's now not blind.

## I.

## DELIVERANCE

O DEATH, fair Death, sole comforter and sweet,  
Nor Love nor Hope can give such gifts as thine.  
Sleep hardly shows us round thy shadowy shrine  
What roses hang, what music floats, what feet  
Pass and what wings of angels. We repeat  
Wild words or mild, disastrous or divine,  
Blind prayer, blind imprecation, seeing no sign  
Nor hearing aught of thee not faint and fleet  
As words of men or snowflakes on the wind.  
But if we chide thee, saying "Thou hast sinned,  
thou hast sinned,  
Dark Death, to take so sweet a light away  
As shone but late, though shadowed, in our skies,"  
We hear thine answer—"Night has given what day  
Denied him : darkness hath unsealed his eyes."

## III

## THANKSGIVING

COULD love give strength to thank thee ! Love can  
give

Strong sorrow heart to suffer : what we bear  
We would not put away, albeit this were  
A burden love might cast aside and live.

Love chooses rather pain than palliative,

Sharp thought than soft oblivion. May we dare  
So trample down our passion and our prayer  
That fain would cling round feet now fugitive  
And stay them—so remember, so forget,

What joy we had who had his presence yet,  
What griefs were his while joy in him was ours

And grief made weary music of his breath,  
As even to hail his best and last of hours

With love grown strong enough to thank thee,  
Death?



## IV

## LIBITINA VERTICORDIA

SISTER of sleep, healer of life, divine

As rest and strong as very love may be,  
To set the soul that love could set not free,  
To bid the skies that day could bid not shine,  
To give the gift that life withheld was thine.

With all my heart I loved one borne from me :  
And all my heart bows down and praises thee,  
Death, that hast now made grief not his but mine.

O Changer of men's hearts, we would not bid thee  
Turn back our hearts from sorrow : this alone  
We bid, we pray thee, from thy sovereign throne  
And sanctuary sublime where heaven has hid thee,  
Give : grace to know of those for whom we weep  
That if they wake their life is sweet as sleep.

## V

## THE ORDER OF RELEASE

THOU canst not give it. Grace enough is ours  
To know that pain for him has fallen on rest.

The worst we know was his on earth : the best,  
We fain would think,—a thought no fear deflowers—  
Is his, released from bonds of rayless hours.

Ah, turn our hearts from longing ; bid our quest  
Cease, as content with failure. This thy guest  
Sleeps, vexed no more of time's imperious powers,  
The spirit of hope, the spirit of change and loss,  
The spirit of love bowed down beneath his cross,

Nor now needs comfort from the strength of song.  
Love, should he wake, bears now no cross for him :  
Dead hope, whose living eyes like his were dim,  
Has brought forth better comfort, strength more  
strong.

## VI

## PSYCHAGOGOS

As Greece of old acclaimed thee God and man,  
So, Death, our tongue acclaims thee : yet wast thou  
Hailed of old Rome as Romans hail thee now,  
Goddess and woman. Since the sands first ran  
That told when first man's life and death began,  
The shadows round thy blind ambiguous brow  
Have mocked the votive plea, the pleading vow  
That sought thee sorrowing, fain to bless or ban.

But stronger than a father's love is thine,  
And gentler than a mother's. Lord and God,  
Thy staff is surer than the wizard rod  
That Hermes bare as priest before thy shrine  
And herald of thy mercies. We could give  
Nought, when we would have given : thou bidst  
him live.

## VII

## THE LAST WORD

So many a dream and hope that went and came,  
So many and sweet, that love thought like to be,  
Of hours as bright and soft as those for me  
That made our hearts for song's sweet love the same,  
Lie now struck dead, that hope seems one with  
shame.

O Death, thy name is Love : we know it, and see  
The witness : yet for very love's sake we  
Can hardly bear to mix with thine his name.

Philip, how hard it is to bid thee part  
Thou knowest, if aught thou knowest where now  
thou art

Of us that loved and love thee. None may tell  
What none but knows—how hard it is to say  
The word that seals up sorrow, darkens day,  
And bids fare forth the soul it bids farewell.

## IN MEMORY OF AURELIO SAFFI

THE wider world of men that is not ours  
 Receives a soul whose life on earth was light.  
 Though darkness close the date of human hours,  
 Love holds the spirit and sense of life in sight,  
 That may not, even though death bid fly, take flight.  
 Faith, love, and hope fulfilled with memory, see  
 As clear and dear as life could bid it be  
 The present soul that is and is not he.

He, who held up the shield and sword of Rome  
 Against the ravening brood of recreant France,  
 Beside the man of men whom heaven took home  
 When earth beheld the spring's first eyebeams  
 glance  
 And life and winter seemed alike a trance .  
 Eighteen years since, in sight of heaven and spring  
 That saw the soul above all souls take wing,  
 He too now hears the heaven we hear not sing.

He too now dwells where death is dead, and stands  
 Where souls like stars exult in life to be :  
 Whence all who linked heroic hearts and hands  
 Shine on our sight, and give it strength to see  
 What hope makes fair for all whom faith makes  
 free :

Free with such freedom as we find in sleep,  
 The light sweet shadow of death, when dreams are  
     deep  
 And high as heaven whence light and lightning leap.

And scarce a month yet gone, his living hand  
 Writ loving words that sealed me friend of his.  
 Are heaven and earth as near as sea to strand?  
 May life and death as bride and bridegroom kiss?  
 His last month's written word abides, and is;  
 Clear as the sun that lit through storm and strife  
 And darkling days when hope took fear to wife  
 The faith whose fire was light of all his life.

A life so fair, so pure of earthlier leaven,  
 That none hath won through higher and harder  
     ways  
 The deathless life of death which earth calls heaven;  
 Heaven, and the light of love on earth, and praise  
 Of silent memory through subsiding days  
 Wherein the light subsides not whence the past  
 Feeds full with life the future. Time holds fast  
 Their names whom faith forgets not, first and last.

Forget? The dark forgets not dawn, nor we  
 The suns that sink to rise again, and shine  
 Lords of live years and ages. Earth and sea  
 Forget not heaven that makes them seem divine,  
 Though night put out their fires and bid their  
     shrine  
 Be dark and pale as storm and twilight. Day,  
 Not night, is everlasting: life's full sway  
 Bids death bow down as dead, and pass away.

What part has death in souls that past all fear  
 Win heavenward their supernal way, and smite  
 With scorn sublime as heaven such dreams as here  
 Plague and perplex with cloud and fire the light  
 That leads men's waking souls from glimmering  
 night

To the awless heights of day, whereon man's awe,  
 Transfigured, dies in rapture, seeing the law  
 Sealed of the sun that earth arising saw ?

Faith, justice, mercy, love, and heaven-born hate  
 That sets them all on fire and bids them be  
 More than soft words and dreams that wake too late,  
 Shone living through the lordly life that we  
 Beheld, revered, and loved on earth, while he  
 Dwelt here, and bade our eyes take light thereof ;  
 Light as from heaven that flamed or smiled above  
 In light or fire whose very hate was love.

No hate of man, but hate of hate whose foam  
 Sheds poison forth from tongues of snakes and  
 priests,  
 And stains the sickening air with steams whence Rome  
 Now feeds not full the God that slays and feasts ;  
 For now the fangs of all the ravenous beasts  
 That ramped about him, fain of prayer and prey,  
 Fulfil their lust no more : the tide of day  
 Swells, and compels him down the deathward way.

Night sucks the Church its creature down, and hell  
 Yawns, heaves, and yearns to clasp its loathliest  
 child

Close to the breasts that bore it. All the spell  
 Whence darkness saw the dawn in heaven defiled  
 Is dumb as death : the lips that lied and smiled



Wax white for fear as ashes. She that bore  
 The banner up of darkness now no more  
 Sheds night and fear and shame from shore to shore.

When they that cast her kingdom down were born,  
 North cried on south and east made moan to west  
 For hopes that love had hardly heart to mourn,  
 For Italy that was not. Kings on quest,  
 By priests whose blessings burn as curses blest,  
 Made spoil of souls and bodies bowed and bound,  
 Hunted and harried, leashed as horse or hound,  
 And hopeless of the hope that died unfound.

And now that faith has brought forth fruit to time,  
 How should not memory praise their names, and  
 hold

Their record even as Dante's life sublime,  
 Who bade his dream, found fair and false of old,  
 Live? Not till earth and heaven be dead and cold  
 May man forget whose work and will made one  
 Italy, fair as heaven or freedom won,  
 And left their fame to shine beside her sun.

*April 1890.*

## THE FESTIVAL OF BEATRICE

DANTE, sole standing on the heavenward height,  
 Beheld and heard one saying, "Behold me well :  
 I am, I am Beatrice." Heaven and hell  
 Kept silence, and the illimitable light  
 Of all the stars was darkness in his sight  
 Whose eyes beheld her eyes again, and fell  
 Shame-stricken. Since her soul took flight to dwell  
 In heaven, six hundred years have taken flight.

And now that heavenliest part of earth whereon  
 Shines yet their shadow as once their presence shone  
 To her bears witness for his sake, as he  
 For hers bare witness when her face was gone :  
 No slave, no hospice now for grief—but free  
 From shore to mountain and from Alp to sea.

## THE MONUMENT OF GIORDANO BRUNO

### I

NOT from without us, only from within,  
 Comes or can ever come upon us light  
 Whereby the soul keeps ever truth in sight.  
 No truth, no strength, no comfort man may win,  
 No grace for guidance, no release from sin,  
 Save of his own soul's giving. Deep and bright  
 As fire enkindled in the core of night  
 Burns in the soul where once its fire has been  
 The light that leads and quickens thought, inspired  
 To doubt and trust and conquer. So he said  
 Whom Sidney, flower of England, lordliest head  
 Of all we love, loved : but the fates required  
 A sacrifice to hate and hell, ere fame  
 Should set with his in heaven Giordano's name.

### II

Cover thine eyes and weep, O child of hell,  
 Grey spouse of Satan, Church of name abhorred.  
 Weep, withered harlot, with thy weeping lord,  
 Now none will buy the heaven thou hast to sell  
 At price of prostituted souls, and swell  
 Thy loveless list of lovers. Fire and sword  
 No more are thine : the steel, the wheel, the cord,  
 The flames that rose round living limbs, and fell

244 THE MONUMENT OF GIORDANO BRUNO

In lifeless ash and ember, now no more  
Approve thee godlike. Rome, redeemed at last  
From all the red pollution of thy past,  
Acclaims the grave bright face that smiled of yore  
Even on the fire that caught it round and clomb  
To cast its ashes on the face of Rome.

*June 9, 1889.*

## LIFE IN DEATH

HE should have followed who goes forth before us,  
Last born of us in life, in death first-born :  
The last to lift up eyes against the morn,  
The first to see the sunset. Life, that bore us  
Perchance for death to comfort and restore us,  
Of him hath left us here awhile forlorn,  
For him is as a garment overworn,  
And time and change, with suns and stars in chorus,  
Silent. But if, beyond all change or time,  
A law more just, more equal, more sublime  
Than sways the surge of life's loud sterile sea  
Sways that still world whose peace environs him,  
Where death lies dead as night when stars wax dim,  
Above all thought or hope of ours is he.

*August 2, 1891.*

## EPICEDE

As a vesture shalt thou change them, said the prophet,

And the raiment that was flesh is turned to dust ;  
Dust and flesh and dust again the likeness of it,

And the fine gold woven and worn of youth is rust.  
Hours that wax and wane salute the shade and scoff it,  
That it knows not aught it doth nor aught it must :  
Day by day the speeding soul makes haste to doff it,  
Night by night the pride of life resigns its trust.

Sleep, whose silent notes of song loud life's derange  
not,

Takes the trust in hand awhile as angels may :  
Joy with wings that rest not, grief with wings that  
range not,

Guard the gates of sleep and waking, gold or grey.  
Joys that joys estrange, and griefs that griefs estrange  
not,

Day that yearns for night, and night that yearns for  
day,

As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they change  
not,

Seeing that change may never change or pass  
away.

Life of death makes question, "What art thou that  
    changeest ?

    What am I, that fear should trust or faith should  
    doubt ?

I that lighten, thou that darkenest and estrangest,  
    Is it night or day that girds us round about ?

Light and darkness on the ways wherein thou  
    rangeest

    Seem as one, and beams as clouds they put to  
    rout.

Strange is hope, but fear of all things born were  
    strangest,

    Seeing that none may strive with change to cast it  
    out.

"Change alone stands fast, thou sayest, O death :  
    I know not :

    What art thou, my brother death, that thou  
    shouldst know ?

Men may reap no fruits of fields wherein they sow  
    not ;

    Hope or fear is all the seed we have to sow.

Winter seals the sacred springs up that they flow  
    not :

    Wind and sun and change unbind them, and they  
    flow.

Am I thou or art thou I ? The years that show not  
    Pass, and leave no sign when time shall be to  
    show."

Hope makes suit to faith lest fear give ear to sorrow :

    Doubt strews dust upon his head, and goes his way.

All the golden hope that life of death would borrow,

    How, if death require again, may life repay ?



Earth endures no darkness whence no light yearns  
thorough ;

God in man as light in darkness lives, they say :  
Yet, would midnight take assurance of the morrow,  
Who shall pledge the faith or seal the bond of day ?

Darkness, mute or loud with music or with mourn-  
ing,

Starry darkness, winged with wind or clothed with  
calm,

Dreams no dream of grief or fear or wrath or warn-  
ing,

Bears no sign of race or goal or strife or palm.  
Word of blessing, word of mocking or of scorning,  
Knows it none, nor whence its breath sheds blight  
or balm.

Yet a little while, and hark, the psalm of morning :  
Yet a little while, and silence takes the psalm.

All the comfort, all the worship, all the wonder,  
All the light of love that darkness holds in fee,  
All the song that silence keeps or keeps not under,  
Night, the soul that knows gives thanks for all to  
thee.

Far beyond the gates that morning strikes in sunder,  
Hopes that grief makes holy, dreams that fear sets  
free,

Far above the throne of thought, the lair of thunder,  
Silent shines the word whose utterance fills the  
sea.

## MEMORIAL VERSES ON THE DEATH OF WILLIAM BELL SCOTT

A LIFE more bright than the sun's face, bowed  
Through stress of season and coil of cloud,  
Sets : and the sorrow that casts out fear  
Scarce deems him dead in his chill still shroud,

Dead on the breast of the dying year,  
Poet and painter and friend, thrice dear  
For love of the suns long set, for love  
Of song that sets not with sunset here,

For love of the fervent heart, above  
Their sense who saw not the swift light move  
That filled with sense of the loud sun's lyre  
The thoughts that passion was fain to prove

In fervent labour of high desire  
And faith that leapt from its own quenched pyre  
Alive and strong as the sun, and caught  
From darkness light, and from twilight fire.

Passion, deep as the depths unsought  
Whence faith's own hope may redeem us nought,  
Filled full with ardour of pain sublime  
His mourning song and his mounting thought.

Elate with sense of a sterner time,  
His hand's flight clomb as a bird's might climb  
    Calvary : dark in the darkling air  
That shrank for fear of the crowning crime,

Three crosses rose on the hillside bare,  
Shown scarce by grace of the lightning's glare  
    That clove the veil of the temple through  
And smote the priests on the threshold there.

The soul that saw it, the hand that drew,  
Whence light as thought's or as faith's glance flew,  
    And stung to life the sepulchral past,  
And bade the stars of it burn anew,

Held no less than the dead world fast  
The light live shadows about them cast,  
    The likeness living of dawn and night,  
The days that pass and the dreams that last.

Thought, clothed round with sorrow as light,  
Dark as a cloud that the moon turns bright,  
    Moved, as a wind on the striving sea,  
That yearns and quickens and flags in flight,

Through forms of colour and song that he  
Who fain would have set its wide wings free  
    Cast round it, clothing or chaining hope  
With lights that last not and shades that flee.

Scarce in song could his soul find scope,  
Scarce the strength of his hand might ope  
    Art's inmost gate of her sovereign shrine,  
To cope with heaven as a man may cope.

But high as the hope of a man may shine  
The faith, the fervour, the life divine  
    That thrills our life and transfigures, rose  
And shone resurgent, a sunbright sign,

Through shapes whereunder the strong soul glows  
And fills them full as a sunlit rose  
    With sense and fervour of life, whose light  
The fool's eye knows not, the man's eye knows.

None that can read or divine aright  
The scriptures writ of the soul may slight  
    The strife of a strenuous soul to show  
More than the craft of the hand may write.

None may slight it, and none may know  
How high the flames that aspire and glow  
    From heart and spirit and soul may climb  
And triumph ; higher than the souls lie low

Whose hearing hears not the livelong rhyme,  
Whose eyesight sees not the light sublime,  
    That shines, that sounds, that ascends and lives  
Unquenched of change, unobscured of time.

A long life's length, as a man's life gives  
Space for the spirit that soars and strives  
    To strive and soar, has the soul shone through  
That heeds not whither the world's wind drives

Now that the days and the ways it knew  
Are strange, are dead as the dawn's grey dew  
    At high midnight of the mounting day  
That mocks the might of the dawn it slew.

Yet haply may not—and haply may—  
No sense abide of the dead sun's ray  
    Wherein the soul that outsoars us now  
Rejoiced with ours in its radiant sway.

Hope may hover, and doubt may bow,  
Dreaming. Haply—they dream not how—  
    Not life but death may indeed be dead  
When silence darkens the dead man's brow.

Hope, whose name is remembrance, fed  
With love that lightens from seasons fled,  
    Dreams, and craves not indeed to know,  
That death and life are as souls that wed.

But change that falls on the heart like snow  
Can chill not memory nor hope, that show  
    The soul, the spirit, the heart and head,  
Alive above us who strive below.

## AN OLD SAYING

MANY waters cannot quench love,  
Neither can the floods drown it.  
Who shall snare or slay the white dove  
Faith, whose very dreams crown it,  
Gird it round with grace and peace, deep,  
Warm, and pure, and soft as sweet sleep ?  
Many waters cannot quench love,  
Neither can the floods drown it.

Set me as a seal upon thine heart,  
As a seal upon thine arm.  
How should we behold the days depart  
And the nights resign their charm ?  
Love is as the soul : though hate and fear  
Waste and overthrow, they strike not here.  
Set me as a seal upon thine heart,  
As a seal upon thine arm.

## A MOSS-ROSE

IF the rose of all flowers be the rarest  
That heaven may adore from above,  
And the fervent moss-rose be the fairest  
That sweetens the summer with love,

Can it be that a fairer than any  
Should blossom afar from the tree?  
Yet one, and a symbol of many,  
Shone sudden for eyes that could see.

In the grime and the gloom of November  
The bliss and the bloom of July  
Bade autumn rejoice and remember  
The balm of the blossoms gone by.

Would you know what moss-rose now it may be  
That puts all the rest to the blush,  
The flower was the face of a baby,  
The moss was a bonnet of plush.



## TO A CAT

## I

STATELY, kindly, lordly friend,  
     Condescend  
 Here to sit by me, and turn  
 Glorious eyes that smile and burn,  
 Golden eyes, love's lustrous meed,  
 On the golden page I read.

All your wondrous wealth of hair,  
     Dark and fair,  
 Silken-shaggy, soft and bright  
 As the clouds and beams of night,  
 Pays my reverent hand's caress  
 Back with friendlier gentleness.

Dogs may fawn on all and some  
     As they come ;  
 You, a friend of loftier mind,  
 Answer friends alone in kind.  
 Just your foot upon my hand  
 Softly bids it understand.

Morning round this silent sweet  
Garden-seat  
Sheds its wealth of gathering light,  
Thrills the gradual clouds with might,  
Changes woodland, orchard, heath,  
Lawn, and garden there beneath.

Fair and dim they gleamed below :  
Now they glow  
Deep as even your sunbright eyes,  
Fair as even the wakening skies.  
Can it not or can it be  
Now that you give thanks to see ?

May not you rejoice as I,  
Seeing the sky  
Change to heaven revealed, and bid  
Earth reveal the heaven it hid  
All night long from stars and moon,  
Now the sun sets all in tune ?

What within you wakes with day  
Who can say ?  
All too little may we tell,  
Friends who like each other well,  
What might haply, if we might,  
Bid us read our lives aright.

## II

Wild on woodland ways your sires  
Flashed like fires ;

Fair as flame and fierce and fleet  
As with wings on wingless feet  
Shone and sprang your mother, free,  
Bright and brave as wind or sea.

Free and proud and glad as they,  
    Here to-day  
Rests or roams their radiant child,  
Vanquished not, but reconciled,  
Free from curb of aught above  
Save the lovely curb of love.

Love through dreams of souls divine  
    Fain would shine  
Round a dawn whose light and song  
Then should right our mutual wrong—  
Speak, and seal the love-lit law  
Sweet Assisi's seer foresaw.

Dreams were theirs ; yet haply may  
    Dawn a day  
When such friends and fellows born,  
Seeing our earth as fair at morn,  
May for wiser love's sake see  
More of heaven's deep heart than we.

## HAWTHORN DYKE

ALL the golden air is full of balm and bloom

Where the hawthorns line the shelving dyke with  
flowers.

Joyous children born of April's happiest hours,  
High and low they laugh and lighten, knowing their  
doom

Bright as brief—to bless and cheer they know not  
whom,

Heed not how, but washed and warmed with suns  
and showers

Smile, and bid the sweet soft gradual banks and  
bowers

Thrill with love of sunlit fire or starry gloom.

All our moors and lawns all round rejoice ; but here  
All the rapturous resurrection of the year

Finds the radiant utterance perfect, sees the word  
Spoken, hears the light that speaks it. Far and  
near,

All the world is heaven : and man and flower and  
bird

Here are one at heart with all things seen and  
heard.

## THE BROTHERS

THERE were twa brethren fell on strife ;  
 Sweet fruits are sair to gather :  
 The tane has reft his brother of life ;  
 And the wind wears owre the heather.

There were twa brethren fell to fray ;  
 Sweet fruits are sair to gather :  
 The tane is clad in a cloak of clay ;  
 And the wind wears owre the heather.

O loud and loud was the live man's cry,  
 (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
 " Would God the dead and the slain were I ! "  
 And the wind wears owre the heather.

" O sair was the wrang and sair the fray,"  
 (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
 " But liefer had love be slain than slay."  
 And the wind wears owre the heather.

" O sweet is the life that sleeps at hame,"  
 (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
 " But I maun wake on a far sea's faem."  
 And the wind wears owre the heather.

“ And women are fairest of a’ things fair,”  
    (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
“ But never shall I kiss woman mair.”  
    And the wind wears owre the heather.

Between the birk and the aik and the thorn  
    (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
He’s laid his brother to lie forlorn :  
    And the wind wears owre the heather.

Between the bent and the burn and the broom  
    (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
He’s laid him to sleep till dawn of doom :  
    And the wind wears owre the heather.

He’s tane him owre the waters wide,  
    (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
Afar to fleet and afar to bide :  
    And the wind wears owre the heather.

His hair was yellow, his cheek was red,  
    (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
When he set his face to the wind and fled :  
    And the wind wears owre the heather.

His banes were stark and his een were bright  
    (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
When he set his face to the sea by night :  
    And the wind wears owre the heather.

His cheek was wan and his hair was grey  
    (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
When he came back hame frae the wide world’s way :  
    And the wind wears owre the heather.

His banes were weary, his een were dim,  
    (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
And nae man lived and had mind of him :  
    And the wind wears owre the heather.

“ O whatten a wreck wad they seek on land ”  
    (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
“ That they houk the turf to the seaward hand? ”  
    And the wind wears owre the heather.

“ O whatten a prey wad they think to take ”  
    (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
“ That they delve the dykes for a dead man’s sake? ”  
    And the wind wears owre the heather.

A bane of the dead in his hand he’s tane ;  
    Sweet fruits are sair to gather :  
And the red blood brak frae the dead white bane.  
    And the wind wears owre the heather.

He’s cast it forth of his auld faint hand ;  
    Sweet fruits are sair to gather ;  
And the red blood ran on the wan wet sand.  
    And the wind wears owre the heather.

“ O whatten a slayer is this,” they said,  
    (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
“ That the straik of his hand should raise his dead? ”  
    And the wind wears owre the heather.

“ O weel is me for the sign I take ”  
    (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
“ That now I may die for my auld sin’s sake.”  
    And the wind wears owre the heather.



“For the dead was in wait now fifty year,”  
 (Sweet fruits are sair to gather)  
 “And now shall I die for his blood’s sake here.”  
 And the wind wears owre the heather.

## JACOBITE SONG

Now who will speak, and lie not,  
 And pledge not life, but give?  
 Slaves herd with herded cattle :  
 The dawn grows bright for battle,  
 And if we die, we die not ;  
 And if we live, we live.

The faith our fathers fought for,  
 The kings our fathers knew,  
 We fight but as they fought for :  
 We seek the goal they sought for,  
 The chance they hailed and knew,  
 The praise they strove and wrought for,  
 To leave their blood as dew  
 On fields that flower anew.

Men live that serve the stranger ;  
 Hounds live that huntsmen tame :  
 These life-days of our living  
 Are days of God's good giving  
 Where death smiles soft on danger  
 And life scowls dark on shame.

## JACOBITE SONG

And what would you do other,  
Sweet wife, if you were I ?  
And how should you be other,  
My sister, than your brother,  
If you were man as I,  
Born of our sire and mother,  
With choice to cower and fly,  
And chance to strike and die ?

No churl's our oldworld name is,  
The lands we leave are fair :  
But fairer far than these are,  
But wide as all the seas are,  
But high as heaven the fame is  
That if we die we share.

Our name the night may swallow,  
Our lands the churl may take :  
But night nor death may swallow,  
Nor hell's nor heaven's dim hollow,  
The star whose height we take,  
The star whose light we follow  
For faith's unfaltering sake  
Till hope that sleeps awake.

Soft hope's light lure we serve not,  
Nor follow, fain to find :  
Dark time's last word may smite her  
Dead, ere man's falsehood blight her :  
But though she die, we swerve not,  
Who cast not eye behind.

Faith speaks when hope dissembles :  
Faith lives when hope lies dead :

If death as life dissembles,  
And all that night assembles  
Of stars at dawn lie dead,  
Faint hope that smiles and trembles  
May tell not well for dread :  
But faith has heard it said.

Now who will fight, and fly not,  
And grudge not life to give?  
And who will strike beside us,  
If life's or death's light guide us?  
For if we live, we die not,  
And if we die, we live.

## THE BALLAD OF DEAD MEN'S BAY

THE sea swings owre the slants of sand,  
 All white with winds that drive ;  
 The sea swirls up to the still dim strand,  
 Where nae man comes alive.

At the grey soft edge of the fruitless surf  
 A light flame sinks and springs ;  
 At the grey soft rim of the flowerless turf  
 A low flame leaps and clings.

What light is this on a sunless shore,  
 What gleam on a starless sea ?  
 Was it earth's or hell's waste womb that bore  
 Such births as should not be ?

As lithe snakes turning, as bright stars burning,  
 They bicker and beckon and call ;  
 As wild waves churning, as wild winds yearning,  
 They flicker and climb and fall.

A soft strange cry from the landward rings—  
 " What ails the sea to shine ? "  
 A keen sweet note from the spray's rim springs—  
 " What fires are these of thine ? "

A soul am I that was born on earth  
For ae day's waesome span :  
Death bound me fast on the bourn of birth  
Ere I were christened man.

" A light by night, I fleet and fare  
Till the day of wrath and woe ;  
On the hems of earth and the skirts of air  
Winds hurl me to and fro."

" O well is thee, though the weird be strange  
That bids thee flit and flee ;  
For hope is child of the womb of change,  
And hope keeps watch with thee.

" When the years are gone, and the time is come,  
God's grace may give thee grace ;  
And thy soul may sing, though thy soul were dumb,  
And shine before God's face.

" But I, that lighten and revel and roll  
With the foam of the plunging sea,  
No sign is mine of a breathing soul  
That God should pity me.

" Nor death, nor heaven, nor hell, nor birth  
Hath part in me nor mine :  
Strong lords are these of the living earth  
And loveless lords of thine.

" But I that know nor lord nor life  
More sure than storm or spray,  
Whose breath is made of sport and strife,  
Whereon shall I find stay ?"

“ And wouldst thou change thy doom with me,  
 Full fain with thee would I :  
 For the life that lightens and lifts the sea  
 Is more than earth or sky.

“ And what if the day of doubt and doom  
 Shall save nor smite not me ?  
 I would not rise from the slain world's tomb  
 If there be no more sea.

“ Take he my soul that gave my soul,  
 And give it thee to keep ;  
 And me, while seas and stars shall roll  
 Thy life that falls on sleep.”

That word went up through the mirk mid sky,  
 And even to God's own ear :  
 And the Lord was ware of the keen twin cry,  
 And wroth was he to hear.

He 's tane the soul of the unsained child  
 That fled to death from birth ;  
 He 's tane the light of the wan sea wild,  
 And bid it burn on earth.

He 's given the ghaist of the babe new-born  
 The gift of the water-sprite,  
 To ride on revel from morn to morn  
 And roll from night to night

He 's given the sprite of the wild wan sea  
 The gift of the new-born man,  
 A soul for ever to bide and be  
 When the years have filled their span.



THE BALLAD OF DEAD MEN'S BAY 269

When a year was gone and a year was come,  
O loud and loud cried they—  
“For the lee-lang year thou hast held us dumb  
Take now thy gifts away!”

O loud and lang they cried on him,  
And sair and sair they prayed :  
“Is the face of thy grace as the night's face grim  
For those thy wrath has made?

A cry more bitter than tears of men  
From the rim of the dim grey sea ;—  
“Give me my living soul again,  
The soul thou gavest me,  
The doom and the dole of kindly men,  
To bide my weird and be !”

A cry more keen from the wild low land  
Than the wail of waves that roll ;—  
“Take back the gift of a loveless hand,  
Thy gift of doom and dole,  
The weird of men that bide on land ;  
Take from me, take my soul !”

The hands that smite are the hands that spare ;  
They build and break the tomb ;  
They turn to darkness and dust and air  
The fruits of the waste earth's womb ;  
But never the gift of a granted prayer,  
The dole of a spoken doom.

Winds may change at a word unheard,  
But none may change the tides :  
The prayer once heard is as God's own word ;  
The doom once dealt abides.

And ever a cry goes up by day,  
 And ever a wail by night ;  
 And nae ship comes by the weary bay  
 But her shipmen hear them wail and pray,  
 And see with earthly sight  
 The twofold flames of the twin lights play  
 Where the sea-banks green and the sea-floods grey  
 Are proud of peril and fain of prey,  
 And the sand quakes ever ; and ill fare they  
 That look upon that light.

## DEDICATION

1893

THE sea of the years that endure not  
 Whose tide shall endure till we die  
 And know what the seasons assure not,  
     If death be or life be a lie,  
 Sways hither the spirit and thither,  
     A waif in the swing of the sea  
 Whose wrecks are of memories that wither  
     As leaves of a tree.

We hear not and hail not with greeting  
 The sound of the wings of the years,  
 The storm of the sound of them beating,  
     That none till it pass from him hears :  
 But tempest nor calm can imperil  
     The treasures that fade not or fly ;  
 Change bids them not change and be sterile,  
     Death bids them not die.

Hearts plighted in youth to the royal  
 High service of hope and of song,  
 Sealed fast for endurance as loyal,  
     And proved of the years as they throng,

## DEDICATION

Conceive not, believe not, and fear not  
That age may be other than youth ;  
That faith and that friendship may hear not  
And utter not truth.

Not yesterday's light nor to-morrow's  
Gleams nearer or clearer than gleams,  
Though joys be forgotten and sorrows  
Forgotten as changes of dreams,  
The dawn of the days unforgotten  
That noon could eclipse not or slay,  
Whose fruits were as children begotten  
Of dawn upon day.

The years that were flowerful and fruitless,  
The years that were fruitful and dark,  
The hopes that were radiant and rootless,  
The hopes that were winged for their mark,  
Lie soft in the sepulchres fashioned  
Of hours that arise and subside,  
Absorbed and subdued and impassioned,  
In pain or in pride.

But far in the night that entombs them  
The starshine as sunshine is strong,  
And clear through the cloud that resumes them  
Remembrance, a light and a song,  
Rings lustrous as music and hovers  
As birds that impend on the sea,  
And thoughts that their prison-house covers  
Arise and are free.

Forgetfulness deep as a prison  
Holds days that are dead for us fast

Till the sepulchre sees rearisen  
The spirit whose reign is the past,  
Disentrammelled of darkness, and kindled  
With life that is mightier than death,  
When the life that obscured it has dwindled  
And passed as a breath.

But time nor oblivion may darken  
Remembrance whose name will be joy  
While memory forgets not to hearken,  
While manhood forgets not the boy  
Who heard and exulted in hearing  
The songs of the sunrise of youth  
Ring radiant above him, unfearing  
And joyous as truth.

Truth, winged and enkindled with rapture  
And sense of the radiance of yore,  
Fulfilled you with power to recapture  
What never might singer before—  
The life, the delight, and the sorrow  
Of troublous and chivalrous years  
That knew not of night or of morrow,  
Of hopes or of fears.

But wider the wing and the vision  
That quicken the spirit have spread  
Since memory beheld with derision  
Man's hope to be more than his dead.  
From the mists and the snows and the thunders  
Your spirit has brought for us forth  
Light, music, and joy in the wonders  
And charms of the north.

## DEDICATION

The wars and the woes and the glories  
That quicken and lighten and rain  
From the clouds of its chronicled stories,  
The passion, the pride, and the pain,  
Whose echoes were mute and the token  
Was lost of the spells that they spake,  
Rise bright at your bidding, unbroken  
Of ages that break.

For you, and for none of us other,  
Time is not : the dead that must live  
Hold commune with you as a brother  
By grace of the life that you give.  
The heart that was in them is in you,  
Their soul in your spirit endures :  
The strength of their song is the sinew  
Of this that is yours.

Hence is it that life, everlasting  
As light and as music, abides  
In the sound of the surge of it, casting  
Sound back to the surge of the tides,  
Till sons of the sons of the Norsemen  
Watch, hurtling to windward and lee,  
Round England, unbacked of her horsemen,  
The steeds of the sea.

# A CHANNEL PASSAGE

AND OTHER POEMS





IN MEMORY  
OF  
WILLIAM MORRIS  
AND  
EDWARD BURNE JONES

THE  
JOURNAL OF  
THE  
ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE  
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND  
VOLUME 34  
PART 1  
1904

## A CHANNEL PASSAGE

1855

FORTH from Calais, at dawn of night, when sunset  
 summer on autumn shone,  
 Fared the steamer alert and loud through seas whence  
 only the sun was gone :  
 Soft and sweet as the sky they smiled, and bade man  
 welcome : a dim sweet hour  
 Gleamed and whispered in wind and sea, and heaven  
 was fair as a field in flower.  
 Stars fulfilled the desire of the darkling world as with  
 music : the starbright air  
 Made the face of the sea, if aught may make the face  
 of the sea, more fair.

Whence came change ? Was the sweet night weary  
 of rest ? What anguish awoke in the dark ?  
 Sudden, sublime, the strong storm spake : we heard  
 the thunders as hounds that bark.  
 Lovelier if aught may be lovelier than stars, we saw  
 the lightnings exalt the sky,  
 Living and lustrous and rapturous as love that is born  
 but to quicken and lighten and die.

Heaven's own heart at its highest of delight found  
utterance in music and semblance in fire :  
Thunder on thunder exulted, rejoicing to live and to  
sate the night's desire.

And the night was alive and anhungered of life as a  
tiger from toils cast free :  
And a rapture of rage made joyous the spirit and  
strength of the soul of the sea.  
All the weight of the wind bore down on it, freighted  
with death for fraught :  
And the keen waves kindled and quickened as things  
transfigured or things distraught.  
And madness fell on them laughing and leaping ; and  
madness came on the wind :  
And the might and the light and the darkness of  
storm were as storm in the heart of Ind.  
Such glory, such terror, such passion, as lighten and  
harrow the far fierce East,  
Rang, shone, spake, shuddered around us : the night  
was an altar with death for priest.  
The channel that sunders England from shores where  
never was man born free  
Was clothed with the likeness and thrilled with the  
strength and the wrath of a tropic sea.  
As a wild steed ramps in rebellion, and rears till it  
swerves from a backward fall,  
The strong ship struggled and reared, and her deck  
was upright as a sheer cliff's wall.  
Stern and prow plunged under, alternate : a glimpse,  
a recoil, a breath,  
And she sprang as the life in a god made man would  
spring at the throat of death.  
Three glad hours, and it seemed not an hour of  
supreme and supernal joy,

Filled full with delight that revives in remembrance  
a sea-bird's heart in a boy.  
For the central crest of the night was cloud that  
thundered and flamed, sublime  
As the splendour and song of the soul everlasting  
that quickens the pulse of time.  
The glory beholden of man in a vision, the music of  
light overheard,  
The rapture and radiance of battle, the life that  
abides in the fire of a word,  
In the midmost heaven enkindled, was manifest far  
on the face of the sea,  
And the rage in the roar of the voice of the waters  
was heard but when heaven breathed free.  
Far eastward, clear of the covering of cloud, the sky  
laughed out into light  
From the rims of the storm to the sea's dark edge  
with flames that were flowerlike and white.  
The leaping and luminous blossoms of live sheet  
lightning that laugh as they fade  
From the cloud's black base to the black wave's brim  
rejoiced in the light they made.  
Far westward, throned in a silent sky, where life was  
in lustrous tune,  
Shone, sweeter and surer than morning or evening,  
the steadfast smile of the moon.  
The limitless heaven that enshrined them was lovelier  
than dreams may behold, and deep  
As life or as death, revealed and transfigured, may  
shine on the soul through sleep.  
All glories of toil and of triumph and passion and  
pride that it yearns to know  
Bore witness there to the soul of its likeness and  
kinship, above and below.

The joys of the lightnings, the songs of the thunders,  
the strong sea's labour and rage,

Were tokens and signs of the war that is life and is  
joy for the soul to wage.

No thought strikes deeper or higher than the heights  
and the depths that the night made bare,  
Illimitable, infinite, awful and joyful, alive in the  
summit of air—

Air stilled and thrilled by the tempest that thundered  
between its reign and the sea's,

Rebellious, rapturous, and transient as faith or as  
terror that bows men's knees.

No love sees loftier and fairer the form of its godlike  
vision in dreams

Than the world shone then, when the sky and the  
sea were as love for a breath's length seems—

One utterly, mingled and mastering and mastered  
and laughing with love that subsides

As the glad mad night sank panting and satiate with  
storm, and released the tides.

In the dense mid channel the steam-souled ship hung  
hovering, assailed and withheld

As a soul born royal, if life or if death be against it,  
is thwarted and quelled.

As the glories of myriads of glowworms in lustrous  
grass on a boundless lawn

Were the glories of flames phosphoric that made of  
the water a light like dawn.

A thousand Phosphors, a thousand Hespers, awoke  
in the churning sea,

And the swift soft hiss of them living and dying was  
clear as a tune could be ;

As a tune that is played by the fingers of death on  
the keys of life or of sleep,



Audible alway alive in the storm, too fleet for a dream  
to keep :

Too fleet, too sweet for a dream to recover and  
thought to remember awake :

Light subtler and swifter than lightning, that whis-  
pers and laughs in the live storm's wake,

In the wild bright wake of the storm, in the dense  
loud heart of the labouring hour,

A harvest of stars by the storm's hand reaped, each  
fair as a star-shaped flower.

And sudden and soft as the passing of sleep is the  
passing of tempest seemed

When the light and the sound of it sank, and the  
glory was gone as a dream half dreamed.

The glory, the terror, the passion that made of the  
midnight a miracle, died,

Not slain at a stroke, nor in gradual reluctance abated  
of power and of pride ;

With strong swift subsidence, awful as power that is  
wearied of power upon earth,

As a God that were wearied of power upon heaven,  
and were fain of a new God's birth,

The might of the night subsided : the tyranny kindled  
in darkness fell :

And the sea and the sky put off them the rapture and  
radiance of heaven and of hell.

The waters, heaving and hungering at heart, made  
way, and were wellnigh fain,

For the ship that had fought them, and wrestled, and  
revelled in labour, to cease from her pain.

And an end was made of it : only remembrance en-  
dures of the glad loud strife ;

And the sense that a rapture so royal may come not  
again in the passage of life.

## THE LAKE OF GAUBE

THE sun is lord and god, sublime, serene,  
 And sovereign on the mountains : earth and air  
 Lie prone in passion, blind with bliss unseen  
 By force of sight and might of rapture, fair  
 As dreams that die and know not what they were.  
 The lawns, the gorges, and the peaks, are one  
 Glad glory, thrilled with sense of unison  
 In strong compulsive silence of the sun.

Flowers dense and keen as midnight stars aflame  
 And living things of light like flames in flower  
 That glance and flash as though no hand might tame  
 Lightnings whose life outshone their stormlit hour  
 And played and laughed on earth, with all their  
     power  
 Gone, and with all their joy of life made long  
 And harmless as the lightning life of song,  
 Shine sweet like stars when darkness feels them  
     strong.

The deep mild purple flaked with moonbright gold  
 That makes the scales seem flowers of hardened  
     light,

The flamelike tongue, the feet that noon leaves cold,  
The kindly trust in man, when once the sight  
Grew less than strange, and faith bade fear take  
flight,

Outlive the little harmless life that shone  
And gladdened eyes that loved it, and was gone  
Ere love might fear that fear had looked thereon.

Fear held the bright thing hateful, even as fear,  
Whose name is one with hate and horror, saith  
That heaven, the dark deep heaven of water near,  
Is deadly deep as hell and dark as death.  
The rapturous plunge that quickens blood and  
breath

With pause more sweet than passion, ere they strive  
To raise again the limbs that yet would dive  
Deeper, should there have slain the soul alive.

As the bright salamander in fire of the noonshine  
exults and is glad of his day,  
The spirit that quickens my body rejoices to pass  
from the sunlight away,  
To pass from the glow of the mountainous flowerage,  
the high multitudinous bloom,  
Far down through the fathomless night of the water,  
the gladness of silence and gloom.  
Death-dark and delicious as death in the dream of a  
lover and dreamer may be,  
It clasps and encompasses body and soul with delight  
to be living and free :  
Free utterly now, though the freedom endure but the  
space of a perilous breath,  
And living, though girdled about with the darkness  
and coldness and strangeness of death :

Each limb and each pulse of the body rejoicing, each  
nerve of the spirit at rest,  
All sense of the soul's life rapture, a passionate peace  
in its blindness blest.  
So plunges the downward swimmer, embraced of the  
water unfathomed of man,  
The darkness unplummeted, icier than seas in mid-  
winter, for blessing or ban ;  
And swiftly and sweetly, when strength and breath  
fall short, and the dive is done,  
Shoots up as a shaft from the dark depth shot, sped  
straight into sight of the sun ;  
And sheer through the snow-soft water, more dark  
than the roof of the pines above,  
Strikes forth, and is glad as a bird whose flight is  
impelled and sustained of love.  
As a sea-mew's love of the sea-wind breasted and  
ridden for rapture's sake  
Is the love of his body and soul for the darkling  
delight of the soundless lake :  
As the silent speed of a dream too living to live for a  
thought's space more  
Is the flight of his limbs through the still strong chill  
of the darkness from shore to shore.  
Might life be as this is and death be as life that casts  
off time as a robe,  
The likeness of infinite heaven were a symbol revealed  
of the lake of Gaube.

Whose thought has fathomed and measured  
The darkness of life and of death,  
The secret within them treasured,  
The spirit that is not breath ?

Whose vision has yet beholden  
The splendour of death and of life ?  
Though sunset as dawn be golden,  
Is the word of them peace, not strife ?  
Deep silence answers : the glory  
We dream of may be but a dream,  
And the sun of the soul wax hoary  
As ashes that show not a gleam.  
But well shall it be with us ever  
Who drive through the darkness here,  
If the soul that we live by never,  
For aught that a lie saith, fear.

## THE PROMISE OF THE HAWTHORN

SPRING sleeps and stirs and trembles with desire  
Pure as a babe's that nestles toward the breast.  
The world, as yet an all unstricken lyre,  
With all its chords alive and all at rest,  
Feels not the sun's hand yet, but feels his breath  
And yearns for love made perfect. Man and bird,  
Thrilled through with hope of life that casts out death,  
Wait with a rapturous patience till his word  
Speak heaven, and flower by flower and tree by tree  
Give back the silent strenuous utterance. Earth,  
Alive awhile and joyful as the sea,  
Laughs not aloud in joy too deep for mirth,  
Presageful of perfection of delight,  
Till all the unborn green buds be born in white.



## HAWTHORN TIDE

## I

DAWN is alive in the world, and the darkness of  
 heaven and of earth  
 Subsides in the light of a smile more sweet than the  
 loud noon's mirth,  
 Spring lives as a babe lives, glad and divine as the  
 sun, and unsure  
 If aught so divine and so glad may be worshipped  
 and loved and endure.  
 A soft green glory suffuses the love-lit earth with  
 delight,  
 And the face of the noon is fair as the face of the star-  
 clothed night.  
 Earth knows not and doubts not at heart of the  
 glories again to be :  
 Sleep doubts not and dreams not how sweet shall the  
 waking beyond her be.  
 A whole white world of revival awaits May's whisper  
 awhile,  
 Abides and exults in the bud as a soft hushed laugh  
 in a smile.  
 As a maid's mouth laughing with love and subdued  
 for the love's sake, May  
 Shines and withholds for a little the word she revives  
 to say.



When the clouds and the winds and the sunbeams  
are warring and strengthening with joy that  
they live,

Spring, from reluctance enkindled to rapture, from  
slumber to strife,

Stirs, and repents, and is winter, and weeps, and  
awakes as the frosts forgive,

And the dark chill death of the woodland is  
troubled, and dies into life.

And the honey of heaven, of the hives whence night  
feeds full on the springtide's breath,

Fills fuller the lips of the lustrous air with delight  
in the dawn :

Each blossom enkindling with love that is life and  
subsides with a smile into death

Arises and lightens and sets as a star from her  
sphere withdrawn.

Not sleep, in the rapture of radiant dreams, when  
sundawn smiles on the night,

Shows earth so sweet with a splendour and fra-  
grance of life that is love :

Each blade of the glad live grass, each bud that  
receives or rejects the light,

Salutes and responds to the marvel of Maytime  
around and above.

Joy gives thanks for the sight and the savour of  
heaven, and is humbled

With awe that exults in thanksgiving : the towers  
of the flowers of the trees

Shine sweeter than snows that the hand of the season  
has melted and crumbled,

And fair as the foam that is lesser of life than the  
loveliest of these.

But the sense of a life more lustrous with joy and  
enkindled of glory

Than man's was ever or may be, and briefer than  
joys most brief,

Bids man's heart bend and adore, be the man's head  
golden or hoary,

As it leapt but a breath's time since and saluted  
the flower and the leaf.

The rapture that springs into love at the sight of the  
world's exultation

Takes not a sense of rebuke from the sense of  
triumphant awe :

But the spirit that quickens the body fulfils it with  
mute adoration,

And the knees would fain bow down as the eyes that  
rejoiced and saw.

## II

Fair and sublime as the face of the dawn is the  
splendour of May,

But the sky's and the sea's joy fades not as earth's  
pride passes away.

Yet hardly the sun's first lightning or laughter of  
love on the sea

So humbles the heart into worship that knows not or  
doubts if it be

As the first full glory beholden again of the life new-  
born

That hails and applauds with inaudible music the  
season of morn.

A day's length since, and it was not : a night's length  
more, and the sun

Salutes and enkindles a world of delight as a strange  
world won.

A new life answers and thrills to the kiss of the young  
strong year,

And the glory we see is as music we hear not, and  
dream that we hear.

From blossom to blossom the live tune kindles, from  
tree to tree,

And we know not indeed if we hear not the song of  
the life we see.

For the first blithe day that beholds it and worships  
and cherishes cannot but sing

With a louder and lustier delight in the sun and  
the sunlit earth

Than the joy of the days that beheld but the soft  
green dawn of the slow faint spring

Glad and afraid to be glad, and subdued in a shame-  
fast mirth.

When the first bright knoll of the woodland world  
laughs out into fragrant light,

The year's heart changes and quickens with sense  
of delight in desire,

And the kindling desire is one with thanksgiving for  
utter fruition of sight,

For sight and for sense of a world that the sun  
finds meet for his lyre.

Music made of the morning that smites from the  
chords of the mute world song

Trembles and quickens and lightens, unfelt, un-  
beholden, unheard,

From blossom on blossom that climbs and exults in  
the strength of the sun grown strong,

And answers the word of the wind of the spring  
with the sun's own word.

Hard on the skirt of the deep soft copses that spring  
refashions,  
Triumphs and towers to the height of the crown of  
a wildwood tree  
One royal hawthorn, sublime and serene as the joy  
that impassions  
Awe that exults in thanksgiving for sight of the  
grace we see,  
The grace that is given of a god that abides for a  
season, mysterious  
And merciful, fervent and fugitive, seen and un-  
known and adored :  
His presence is felt in the light and the fragrance,  
elate and imperious,  
His laugh and his breath in the blossom are love's,  
the beloved soul's lord.  
For surely the soul if it loves is beloved of the god as  
a lover  
Whose love is not all unaccepted, a worship not  
utterly vain :  
So full, so deep is the joy that revives for the soul  
to recover  
Yearly, beholden of hope and of memory in sun-  
shine and rain.

## III

Wonder and love stand silent, stricken at heart and  
stilled.  
But yet is the cup of delight and of worship un-  
pledged and unfilled.  
A handsbreadth hence leaps up, laughs out as an  
angel crowned,  
A strong full fountain of flowers overflowing above  
and around.

The boughs and the blossoms in triumph salute with  
adoring mirth

The womb that bare them, the glad green mother,  
the sunbright earth.

Downward sweeping, as song subsides into silence,  
none

May hear what sound is the word's they speak to the  
brooding sun.

None that hearken may hear : man may but pass and  
adore,

And humble his heart in thanksgiving for joy that is  
now no more.

And sudden, afront and ahead of him, joy is alive  
and aflame

On the shrine whose incense is given of the godhead,  
again the same

Pale and pure as a maiden secluded in secret and  
cherished with fear,

One sweet glad hawthorn smiles as it shrinks  
under shelter, screened

By two strong brethren whose bounteous blossom  
outsoars it, year after year,

While earth still cleaves to the live spring's breast  
as a babe unweaned.

Never was amaranth fairer in fields where heroes of  
old found rest,

Never was asphodel sweeter : but here they endure  
not long,

Though ever the sight that salutes them again and  
adores them awhile is blest,

And the heart is a hymn, and the sense is a soul,  
and the soul is a song.



Alone on a dyke's trenched edge, and afar from the  
blossoming wildwood's verge,  
Laughs and lightens a sister, triumphal in love-lit  
pride ;  
Clothed round with the sun, and inviolate : her  
blossoms exult as the springtide surge,  
When the wind and the dawn enkindle the snows  
of the shoreward tide.

Hardly the worship of old that rejoiced as it knelt in  
the vision  
Shown of the God new-born whose breath is the  
spirit of spring  
Hailed ever with love more strong and defiant of  
death's derision  
A joy more perfect than here we mourn for as May  
takes wing.  
Time gives it and takes it again and restores it : the  
glory, the wonder,  
The triumph of lustrous blossom that makes of the  
steep sweet bank  
One visible marvel of music inaudible, over and  
under,  
Attuned as in heaven, pass hence and return for the  
sun to thank.  
The stars and the sun give thanks for the glory  
bestowed and beholden,  
For the gladness they give and rejoice in, the  
night and the dawn and the day :  
But nought they behold when the world is aflower  
and the season is golden  
Makes answer as meet and as sweet as the flower  
that itself is May.

## THE PASSING OF THE HAWTHORN

THE coming of the hawthorn brings on earth  
 Heaven : all the spring speaks out in one sweet  
     word,  
 And heaven grows gladder, knowing that earth  
     has heard.

Ere half the flowers are jubilant in birth,  
 The splendour of the laughter of their mirth  
     Dazzles delight with wonder : man and bird  
     Rejoice and worship, stilled at heart and stirred  
 With rapture girt about with awe for girth.

The passing of the hawthorn takes away  
 Heaven : all the spring falls dumb, and all the soul  
 Sinks down in man for sorrow. Night and day  
     Forego the joy that made them one and whole.  
 The change that falls on every starry spray  
     Bids, flower by flower, the knell of springtime toll.



## TO A BABY KINSWOMAN

LOVE, whose light thrills heaven and earth,  
 Smiles and weeps upon thy birth,  
 Child, whose mother's love-lit eyes  
 Watch thee but from Paradise.  
 Sweetest sight that earth can give,  
 Sweetest light of eyes that live,  
 Ours must needs, for hope withdrawn,  
 Hail with tears thy soft spring dawn.  
 Light of hope whose star hath set,  
 Light of love whose sun lives yet,  
 Holier, happier, heavenlier love  
 Breathes about thee, burns above,  
 Surely, sweet, than ours can be,  
 Shed from eyes we may not see,  
 Though thine own may see them shine  
 Night and day, perchance, on thine.  
 Sun and moon that lighten earth  
 Seem not fit to bless thy birth :  
 Scarce the very stars we know  
 Here seem bright enough to show  
 Whence in unimagined skies  
 Glows the vigil of such eyes.  
 Theirs whose heart is as a sea  
 Swoln with sorrowing love of thee  
 Fain would share with thine the sight  
 Seen alone of babes aright,

Watched of eyes more sweet than flowers  
Sleeping or awake : but ours  
Can but deem or dream or guess  
Thee not wholly motherless.  
Might they see or might they know  
What nor faith nor hope may show,  
We whose hearts yearn toward thee now  
Then were blest and wise as thou.  
Had we half thy knowledge,—had  
Love such wisdom,—grief were glad,  
Surely, lit by grace of thee ;  
Life were sweet as death may be.  
Now the law that lies on men  
Bids us mourn our dead : but then  
Heaven and life and earth and death,  
Quickened as by God's own breath,  
All were turned from sorrow and strife :  
Earth and death were heaven and life.  
All too far are then and now  
Sundered : none may be as thou.  
Yet this grace is ours—a sign  
Of that goodlier grace of thine,  
Sweet, and thine alone—to see  
Heaven, and heaven's own love, in thee.  
Bless them, then, whose eyes caress  
Thee, as only thou canst bless.  
Comfort, faith, assurance, love,  
Shine around us, brood above,  
Fear grows hope, and hope grows wise,  
Thrilled and lit by children's eyes.  
Yet in ours the tears unshed,  
Child, for hope that death leaves dead,  
Needs must burn and tremble ; thou  
Knowest not, seest not, why nor how,

More than we know whence or why  
Comes on babes that laugh and lie  
Half asleep, in sweet-lipped scorn,  
Light of smiles outlightening morn,  
Whence enkindled as is earth  
By the dawn's less radiant birth  
All the body soft and sweet  
Smiles on us from face to feet  
When the rose-red hands would fain  
Reach the rose-red feet in vain.  
Eyes and hands that worship thee  
Watch and tend, adore and see  
All these heavenly sights, and give  
Thanks to see and love and live.  
Yet, of all that hold thee dear,  
Sweet, the dearest smiles not here.  
Thine alone is now the grace,  
Haply, still to see her face ;  
Thine, thine only now the sight  
Whence we dream thine own takes light.  
Yet, though faith and hope live blind,  
Yet they live in heart and mind  
Strong and keen as truth may be :  
Yet, though blind as grief were we  
Inly for a weeping-while,  
Sorrow's self before thy smile  
Smiles and softens, knowing that yet,  
Far from us though heaven be set,  
Love, bowed down for thee to bless,  
Dares not call thee motherless.

*May 1894.*

The first of these is the fact that the  
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## THE ALTAR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

ἔς τὸ πᾶν δέ σοι λέγω,  
βωμὸν αἶδεσαι δίκας·  
μηδέ νιν  
κέρδος ἰδὼν ἀθέω ποδὶ λὰξ ἀτίσης·  
ποινὰ γὰρ ἐπέσται.  
κύριον μένει τέλος.

ÆSCH. *Eum.* 538-544

πάρα τὸ φῶς ἰδεῖν.

ÆSCH. *Cho.* 972

## THE ALTAR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

### I

LIGHT and night, whose clouds and glories change  
and mingle and divide,

Veil the truth whereof they witness, show the truth  
of things they hide.

Through the darkness and the splendour of the  
centuries, loud or dumb,

Shines and wanes and shines the spirit, lit with love  
of life to come.

Man, the soul made flesh, that knows not death from  
life, and fain would know,

Sees the face of time change colour as its tides recoil  
and flow.

All his hope and fear and faith and doubt, if aught at  
all they be,

Live the life of clouds and sunbeams, born of heaven  
or earth or sea.

All are buoyed and blown and brightened by their  
hour's evasive breath :

All subside and quail and darken when their hour is  
done to death.

Yet, ere faith, a wandering water, froze and curdled  
into creeds,

Earth, elate as heaven, adored the light that quickens  
dreams to deeds.



## 304 THE ALTAR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Invisible : eye hath not seen it, and ear hath not  
heard as the spirit hath heard

From the shrine that is lit not of sunlight or starlight  
the sound of a limitless word.

And visible : none that hath eyes to behold what the  
spirit must perish or see

Can choose but behold it and worship : a shrine that  
if light were as darkness would be.

Of cloud and of change is the form of the fashion that  
man may behold of it wrought :

Of iron and truth is the mystic mid altar, where  
worship is none but of thought.

No prayer may go up to it, climbing as incense of  
gladness or sorrow may climb :

No rapture of music may ruffle the silence that guards  
it, and hears not of time.

As the winds of the wild blind ages alternate in  
passion of light and of cloud,

So changes the shape of the veil that enshrouds it  
with darkness and light for a shroud.

And the winds and the clouds and the suns fall silent,  
and fade out of hearing or sight,

And the shrine stands fast and is changed not, whose  
likeness was changed as a cloud in the night.

All the storms of time, and wrath of many winds,  
may carve no trace

On the viewless altar, though the veil bear many a  
name and face :

Many a live God's likeness woven, many a scripture  
dark with awe,

Bids the veil seem verier iron than the word of life's  
own law.

Till the might of change hath rent it with a rushing  
wind in twain,

Stone or steel it seems, whereon the wrath of chance  
is wreaked in vain :

Stone or steel, and all behind it or beyond its lifted  
sign

Cloud and vapour, no subsistence of a change-  
unstricken shrine.

God by god flits past in thunder, till his glories turn  
to shades :

God to god bears wondering witness how his gospel  
flames and fades.

More was each of these, while yet they were, than  
man their servant seemed :

Dead are all of these, and man survives who made  
them while he dreamed.

Yet haply or surely, if vision were surer than theirs  
who rejoiced that they saw,

Man might not but see, through the darkness of  
godhead, the light that is surety and law.

On the stone that the close-drawn cloud which veils  
it awhile makes cloudlike stands

The word of the truth everlasting, unspoken of  
tongues and unwritten of hands.

By the sunbeams and storms of the centuries engraven,  
and approved of the soul as it reads,

It endures as a token dividing the light from the  
darkness of dreams and of deeds.

The faces of gods on the face of it carven, or gleam-  
ing behind and above,

Star-glorified Uranus, thunderous Jehovah, for terror  
or worship or love,

## 306 THE ALTAR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Change, wither, and brighten as flowers that the wind  
of eternity sheds upon time,  
All radiant and transient and awful and mortal, and  
leave it unmarred and sublime.  
As the tides that return and recede are the fears and  
the hopes of the centuries that roll,  
Requench'd and rekindled : but strong as the sun is  
the sense of it shrined in the soul.

### II

In the days when time was not, in the time when days  
were none,  
Ere sorrow had life to lot, ere earth gave thanks for  
the sun,  
Ere man in his darkness waking adored what the  
soul in him could,  
And the manifold God of his making was manifest  
evil and good,  
One law from the dim beginning abode and abides in  
the end,  
In sight of him sorrowing and sinning with none but  
his faith for friend.  
Dark were the shadows around him, and darker the  
glories above,  
Ere light from beyond them found him, and bade him  
for love's sake love.  
About him was darkness, and under and over him  
darkness : the night  
That conceived him and bore him had thunder for  
utterance and lightning for light.  
The dust of death was the dust of the ways that the  
tribes of him trod :

And he knew not if just or unjust were the might of  
the mystery of God.  
Strange horror and hope, strange faith and unfaith,  
were his boon and his bane :  
And the God of his trust was the wraith of the soul  
or the ghost of it slain.  
A curse was on death as on birth, and a Presence  
that shone as a sword  
Shed menace from heaven upon earth that beheld  
him, and hailed him her Lord.  
Sublime and triumphant as fire or as lightning, he  
kindled the skies,  
And withered with dread the desire that would look  
on the light of his eyes.  
Earth shuddered with worship, and knew not if hell  
were not hot in her breath ;  
If birth were not sin, and the dew of the morning  
the sweat of her death.  
The watchwords of evil and good were unspoken of  
men and unheard :  
They were shadows that willed as he would, that  
were made and unmade by his word.  
His word was darkness and light, and a wisdom that  
makes men mad  
Sent blindness upon them for sight, that they saw but  
and heard as he bade.  
Cast forth and corrupt from the birth by the crime of  
creation, they stood  
Convicted of evil on earth by the grace of a God found  
good.  
The grace that enkindled and quickened the darkness  
of hell with flame  
Bade man, though the soul in him sickened, obey,  
and give praise to his name.

## 308 THE ALTAR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The still small voice of the spirit whose life is as  
plague's hot breath

Bade man shed blood, and inherit the life of the  
kingdom of death.

“ Bring now for blood-offering thy son to mine altar,  
and bind him and slay,

That the sin of my bidding be done ” : and the soul  
in the slave said, “ Yea.”

Yea, not nay, was the word : and the sacrifice offered  
withal

Was neither of beast nor of bird, but the soul of a  
man, God's thrall.

And the word of his servant spoken was fire, and the  
light of a sword,

When the bondage of Israel was broken, and Sinai  
shrank from the Lord.

With splendour of slaughter and thunder of song as  
the sound of the sea

Were the foes of him stricken in sunder and silenced  
as storms that flee.

Terror and trust and the pride of the chosen, approved  
of his choice,

Saw God in the whirlwind ride, and rejoiced as the  
winds rejoice.

Subdued and exalted and kindled and quenched by  
the sense of his might,

Faith flamed and exulted and dwindled, and saw  
not, and clung to the sight.

The wastes of the wilderness brightened and trembled  
with rapture and dread

When the word of him thundered and lightened and  
spake through the quick and the dead.



The chant of the prophetess, louder and loftier than  
 tempest and wave,  
 Rang triumph more ruthless and prouder than death,  
 and profound as the grave.  
 And sweet as the moon's word spoken in smiles that  
 the blown clouds mar  
 The psalmist's witness in token arose as the speech  
 of a star.  
 Starlight supreme, and the tender desire of the moon,  
 were as one  
 To rebuke with compassion the splendour and strength  
 of the godlike sun.  
 God softened and changed : and the word of his  
 chosen, a fire at the first,  
 Bade man, as a beast or a bird, now slake at the  
 springs his thirst.  
 The souls that were sealed unto death as the bones  
 of the dead lie sealed  
 Rose thrilled and redeemed by the breath of the dawn  
 on the flame-lit field.  
 The glories of darkness, cloven with music of thunder,  
 shrank  
 As the web of the word was unwoven that spake, and  
 the soul's tide sank.  
 And the starshine of midnight that covered Arabia  
 with light as a robe  
 Waxed fiery with utterance that hovered and flamed  
 through the whirlwind on Job.  
 And prophet to prophet and vision to vision made  
 answer sublime,  
 Till the valley of doom and decision was merged in  
 the tides of time.

## III

Then, soft as the dews of night,  
 As the star of the suhdawn bright,  
     As the heart of the sea's hymn deep,  
     And sweet as the balm of sleep,  
 Arose on the world a light  
     Too pure for the skies to keep.

With music sweeter and stranger than heaven had  
     heard  
 When the dark east thrilled with light from a saviour's  
     word  
 And a God grew man to endure as a man and abide  
 The doom of the will of the Lord of the loud world's  
     tide,  
 Whom thunders utter, and tempest and darkness  
     hide,  
 With larger light than flamed from the peak whereon  
 Prometheus, bound as the sun to the world's wheel,  
     shone,  
 A presence passed and abode but on earth a span,  
 And love's own light as a river before him ran,  
 And the name of God for awhile upon earth was man.

O star that wast not and wast for the world a sun,  
 O light that was quenched of priests, and its work  
     undone,  
 O Word that wast not as man's or as God's, if God  
 Be Lord but of hosts whose tread was as death's that  
     trod  
 On souls that felt but his wrath as an unseen rod,



What word, what praise, what passion of hopeless  
 prayer,  
 May now rise up to thee, loud as in years that were,  
 From years that gaze on the works of thy servants  
 wrought  
 While strength was in them to satiate the lust of  
 thought  
 That craved in thy name for blood as the quest it  
 sought?

From the dark high places of Rome  
 Far over the westward foam  
 God's heaven and the sun saw swell  
 The fires of the high priest's hell,  
 And shrank as they curled and clomb  
 And revelled and ravaged and fell.

IV

Yet was not the work of thy word all withered with  
 wasting flame  
 By the sons of the priests that had slain thee, whose  
 evil was wrought in thy name.  
 From the blood-sodden soil that was blasted with  
 fires of the Church and her creed  
 Sprang rarely but surely, by grace of thy spirit,  
 a flower for a weed.  
 Thy spirit, unfelt of thy priests who blasphemed  
 thee, enthralled and enticed  
 To deathward a child that was even as the child we  
 behold in Christ.  
 The Moors, they told her, beyond bright Spain and  
 the strait brief sea,  
 Dwelt blind in the light that for them was as darkness,  
 and knew not thee.

### 312 THE ALTAR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

But the blood of the martyrs whose mission was  
witness for God, they said,  
Might raise to redemption the souls that were here,  
in the sun's sight, dead.  
And the child rose up in the night, when the stars  
were as friends that smiled,  
And sought her brother, and wakened the younger  
and tenderer child.  
From the heaven of a child's glad sleep to the heaven  
of the sight of her eyes  
He woke, and brightened and hearkened, and kindled  
as stars that rise.  
And forth they fared together to die for the stranger's  
sake,  
For the souls of the slayers that should slay them,  
and turn from their sins, and wake.  
And the light of the love that lit them awhile on  
a brief blind quest  
Shines yet on the tear-lit smile that salutes them,  
belated and blest.

And the girl, full-grown to the stature of godhead in  
womanhood, spake  
The word that sweetens and lightens her creed for  
her great love's sake.  
From the godlike heart of Theresa the prayer above  
all prayers heard,  
The cry as of God made woman, a sweet blind  
wonderful word,  
Sprang sudden as flame, and kindled the darkness of  
faith with love,  
And the hollow of hell from beneath shone, quickened  
of heaven from above.

Yea, hell at her word grew heaven, as she prayed  
 that if God thought well  
 She there might stand in the gateway, that none  
 might pass into hell.  
 Not Hermes, guardian and guide, God, herald, and  
 comforter, shed  
 Such lustre of hope from the life of his light on the  
 night of the dead.  
 Not Pallas, wiser and mightier in mercy than Rome's  
 God shone,  
 Wore ever such raiment of love as the soul of a saint  
 put on.  
 So blooms as a flower of the darkness a star of the  
 midnight born,  
 Of the midnight's womb and the blackness of dark-  
 ness, and flames like morn.  
 Nor yet may the dawn extinguish or hide it, when  
 churches and creeds  
 Are withered and blasted with sunlight as poisonous  
 and blossomless weeds.  
 So springs and strives through the soil that the  
 legions of darkness have trod,  
 From the root that is man, from the soul in the body,  
 the flower that is God.

v

Ages and creeds that drift  
 Through change and cloud uplift  
 The soul that soars and seeks her sovereign shrine,  
 Her faith's veiled altar, there  
 To find, when praise and prayer  
 Fall baffled, if the darkness be divine.

314 THE ALTAR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Lights change and shift through star and sun :  
Night, clothed with might of immemorial years, is one.

Day, born and slain of night,  
Hath hardly life in sight  
As she that bears and slays him and survives,  
And gives us back for one  
Cloud-thwarted fiery sun  
The myriad mysteries of the lambent lives  
Whose starry soundless music saith  
That light and life wax perfect even through night  
and death.

In vain had darkness heard  
Light speak the lustrous word  
That cast out faith in all save truth and love :  
In vain death's quickening rod  
Bade man rise up as God,  
Touched as with life unknown in heaven above :  
Fear turned his light of love to fire  
That wasted earth, yet might not slay the soul's  
desire.

Though death seem life, and night  
Bid fear call darkness light,  
Time, faith, and hope keep trust, through sorrow  
and shame,  
Till Christ, by Paul cast out,  
Return, and all the rout  
Of raging slaves whose prayer defiles his name  
Rush headlong to the deep, and die,  
And leave no sign to say that faith once heard them  
lie.

## VI

Since man, with a child's pride proud, and abashed  
as a child and afraid,  
Made God in his likeness, and bowed him to worship  
the Maker he made,  
No faith more dire hath enticed man's trust than the  
saint's whose creed  
Made Caiaphas one with Christ, that worms on the  
cross might feed.  
Priests gazed upon God in the eyes of a babe new-  
born, and therein  
Beheld not heaven, and the wise glad secret of love,  
but sin.  
Accursed of heaven, and baptized with the baptism  
of hatred and hell,  
They spat on the name they despised and adored as a  
sign and a spell.  
"Lord Christ, thou art God, and a liar : they were  
children of wrath, not of grace,  
Unbaptized, unredeemed from the fire they were born  
for, who smiled in thy face."  
Of such is the kingdom—he said it—of heaven : and  
the heavenly word  
Shall live when religion is dead, and when falsehood  
is dumb shall be heard.  
And the message of James and of John was as Christ's  
and as love's own call :  
But wrath passed sentence thereon when Annas  
replied in Paul.  
The dark old God who had slain him grew one with  
the Christ he slew,  
And poison was rank in the grain that with growth  
of his gospel grew.



### 316 THE ALTAR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

And the blackness of darkness brightened : and red  
in the heart of the flame

Shone down, as a blessing that lightened, the curse  
of a new God's name.

Through centuries of burning and trembling belief as  
a signal it shone,

Till man, soul-sick of dissembling, bade fear and her  
frauds begone.

God Cerberus yelps from his throats triune : but his  
day, which was night,

Is quenched, with its stars and the notes of its night-  
birds, in silence and light.

The flames of its fires and the psalms of their  
psalmists are darkened and dumb :

Strong winter has withered the palms of his angels,  
and stricken them numb.

God, father of lies, God, son of perdition, God, spirit  
of ill,

Thy will that for ages was done is undone as a dead  
God's will.

Not Mahomet's sword could slay thee, nor Borgia's  
or Calvin's praise :

But the scales of the spirit that weigh thee are  
weighted with truth, and it slays.

The song of the day of thy fury, when nature and  
death shall quail,

Rings now as the thunders of Jewry, the ghost of a  
dead world's tale.

That day and its doom foreseen and foreshadowed on  
earth, when thou,

Lord God, wast lord of the keen dark season, are  
sport for us now.

Thy claws were clipped and thy fangs plucked out by  
the hands that slew

Men, lovers of man, whose pangs bore witness if  
truth were true.

Man crucified rose again from the sepulchre builded  
to be

No grave for the souls of the men who denied thee,  
but, Lord, for thee.

When Bruno's spirit aspired from the flames that thy  
servants fed,

The spirit of faith was fired to consume thee and  
leave thee dead.

When the light of the sunlike eyes whence laughter  
lightened and flamed

Bade France and the world be wise, faith saw thee  
naked and shamed.

When wisdom deeper and sweeter than Rabelais  
veiled and revealed

Found utterance diviner and meeter for truth whence  
anguish is healed,

Whence fear and hate and belief in thee, fed by thy  
grace from above,

Fall stricken, and utmost grief takes light from the  
lustre of love,

When Shakespeare shone into birth, and the world he  
beheld grew bright,

Thy kingdom was ended on earth, and the darkness  
it shed was light.

In him all truth and the glory thereof and the power  
and the pride,

The song of the soul and her story, bore witness that  
fear had lied.

All hope, all wonder, all trust, all doubt that knows  
not of fear,

The love of the body, the lust of the spirit to see and  
to hear,



### 318 THE ALTAR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

All womanhood, fairer than love could conceive or  
desire or adore,  
All manhood, radiant above all heights that it held  
of yore,  
Lived by the life of his breath, with the speech of his  
soul's will spake,  
And the light lit darkness to death whence never the  
dead shall wake.  
For the light that lived in the sound of the song of  
his speech was one  
With the light of the wisdom that found earth's tune  
in the song of the sun ;  
His word with the word of the lord most high of us  
all on earth,  
Whose soul was a lyre and a sword, whose death  
was a deathless birth.  
Him too we praise as we praise our own who as he  
stand strong ;  
Him, Æschylus, ancient of days, whose word is the  
perfect song.  
When Caucasus showed to the sun and the sea what  
a God could endure,  
When wisdom and light were one, and the hands of  
the matricide pure,  
A song too subtle for psalmist or prophet of Jewry to  
know,  
Elate and profound as the calmest or stormiest of  
waters that flow,  
A word whose echoes were wonder and music of fears  
overcome,  
Bade Sinai bow, and the thunder of godhead on  
Horeb be dumb.  
The childless children of night, strong daughters of  
doom and dread,

The thoughts and the fears that smite the soul, and  
 its life lies dead,  
 Stood still and were quelled by the sound of his word  
 and the light of his thought,  
 And the God that in man lay bound was unbound  
 from the bonds he had wrought.  
 Dark fear of a lord more dark than the dreams of  
 his worshippers knew  
 Fell dead, and the corpse lay stark in the sunlight of  
 truth shown true.

VII

Time, and truth his child, though terror set earth  
 and heaven at odds,  
 See the light of manhood rise on the twilight of the  
 Gods.  
 Light is here for souls to see, though the stars of  
 faith be dead :  
 All the sea that yearned and trembled receives the  
 sun instead.  
 All the shadows on the spirit when fears and dreams  
 were strong,  
 All perdition, all redemption, blind rain-stars watched  
 so long,  
 Love whose root was fear, thanksgiving that cowered  
 beneath the rod,  
 Feel the light that heals and withers : night weeps  
 upon her God.  
 All the names wherein the incarnate Lord lived his  
 day and died  
 Fade from suns to stars, from stars into darkness un-  
 descried.

Christ the man lives yet, remembered of man as  
dreams that leave

Light on eyes that wake and know not if memory  
bid them grieve.

Fire sublime as lightning shines, and exults in thunder  
yet,

Where the battle wields the name and the sword of  
Mahomet.

Far above all wars and gospels, all ebb and flow of  
time,

Lives the soul that speaks in silence, and makes mute  
earth sublime.

Still for her, though years and ages be blinded and  
bedinned,

Mazed with lightnings, crazed with thunders, life  
rides and guides the wind.

Death may live or death may die, and the truth be  
light or night :

Not for gain of heaven may man put away the rule  
of right.

## A NEW YEAR'S EVE

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI DIED DECEMBER 29, 1894

THE stars are strong in the deeps of the lustrous  
 night,  
 Cold and splendid as death if his dawn be bright ;  
 Cold as the cast-off garb that is cold as clay,  
 Splendid and strong as a spirit intense as light.

A soul more sweet than the morning of new-born May  
 Has passed with the year that has passed from the  
 world away.

A song more sweet than the morning's first-born  
 song  
 Again will hymn not among us a new year's day.

Not here, not here shall the carol of joy grown strong  
 Ring rapture now, and uplift us, a spell-struck  
 throng,

From dream to vision of life that the soul may see  
 By death's grace only, if death do its trust no wrong.

Scarce yet the days and the starry nights are three  
 Since here among us a spirit abode as we,  
 Girt round with life that is fettered in bonds of  
 time,

And clasped with darkness about as is earth with sea.

And now, more high than the vision of souls may  
climb,  
The soul whose song was as music of stars that  
chime,  
Clothed round with life as of dawn and the  
mounting sun,  
Sings, and we know not here of the song sublime.

No word is ours of it now that the songs are done  
Whence here we drank of delight as in freedom won,  
In deep deliverance given from the bonds we bore.  
There is none to sing as she sang upon earth, not  
one.

We heard awhile : and for us who shall hear no more  
The sound as of waves of light on a starry shore  
Awhile bade brighten and yearn as a father's face  
The face of death, divine as in days of yore.

The grey gloom quickened and quivered : the sunless  
place  
Thrilled, and the silence deeper than time or space  
Seemed now not all everlasting. Hope grew  
strong,  
And love took comfort, given of the sweet song's  
grace.

Love that finds not on earth, where it finds but  
wrong,  
Love that bears not the bondage of years in throng  
Shone to show for her, higher than the years that  
mar,  
The life she looked and longed for as love must  
long.

Who knows? We know not. Afar, if the dead be  
far,  
Alive, if the dead be alive as the soul's works are,  
The soul whose breath was among us a heavenward  
song  
Sings, loves, and shines as it shines for us here a  
star.



## IN A ROSARY

THROUGH the low grey archway children's feet that  
pass

Quicken, glad to find the sweetest haunt of all.  
Brightest wildflowers gleaming deep in lustiest grass,  
Glorious weeds that glisten through the green sea's  
glass,

Match not now this marvel, born to fade and fall.

Roses like a rainbow wrought of roses rise  
Right and left and forward, shining toward the sun.  
Nay, the rainbow lit of sunshine droops and dies  
Ere we dream it hallows earth and seas and skies ;  
Ere delight may dream it lives, its life is done.

Round the border hemmed with high deep hedges  
round

Go the children, peering over or between  
Where the dense bright oval wall of box inwound,  
Reared about the roses fast within it bound,  
Gives them grace to glance at glories else unseen.

Flower outlightening flower and tree outflowering tree  
Feed and fill the sense and spirit full with joy.  
Nought awhile they know of outer earth and sea :  
Here enough of joy it is to breathe and be :  
Here the sense of life is one for girl and boy.



Heaven above them, bright as children's eyes or  
dreams,  
Earth about them, sweet as glad soft sleep can show  
Earth and sky and sea, a world that scarcely seems  
Even in children's eyes less fair than life that gleams  
Through the sleep that none but sinless eyes may  
know.

Near beneath, and near above, the terraced ways  
Wind or stretch and bask or blink against the sun.  
Hidden here from sight on soft or stormy days  
Lies and laughs with love toward heaven, at silent  
gaze,  
All the radiant rosary—all its flowers made one.

All the multitude of roses towering round  
Dawn and noon and night behold as one full flower,  
Fain of heaven and loved of heaven, curbed and  
crowned,  
Raised and reared to make this plot of earthly ground  
Heavenly, could but heaven endure on earth an hour.

Swept away, made nothing now for ever, dead,  
Still the rosary lives and shines on memory, free  
Now from fear of death or change as childhood, fled  
Years on years before its last live leaves were shed :  
None may mar it now, as none may stain the sea.

## THE HIGH OAKS

BARKING HALL, JULY 19TH, 1896

FOURSCORE years and seven  
 Light and dew from heaven  
 Have fallen with dawn on these glad woods each  
           day  
 Since here was born, even here,  
 A birth more bright and dear  
 Than ever a younger year  
 Hath seen or shall till all these pass away,  
 Even all the imperious pride of these,  
 The woodland ways majestic now with towers of  
           trees.

Love itself hath nought  
 Touched of tenderest thought  
 With holiest hallowing of memorial grace  
 For memory, blind with bliss,  
 To love, to clasp, to kiss,  
 So sweetly strange as this,  
 The sense that here the sun first hailed her face,  
 A babe at Her glad mother's breast,  
 And here again beholds it more beloved and blest.

Love's own heart, a living  
Spring of strong thanksgiving,  
Can bid no strength of welling song find way  
When all the soul would seek  
One word for joy to speak,  
And even its strength makes weak  
The too strong yearning of the soul to say  
What may not be conceived or said  
While darkness makes division of the quick and dead.

Haply, where the sun  
Wanes, and death is none,  
The word known here of silence only, held  
Too dear for speech to wrong,  
May leap in living song  
Forth, and the speech be strong  
As here the silence whence it yearned and welled  
From hearts whose utterance love sealed fast  
Till death perchance might give it grace to live at  
last.

Here we have our earth  
Yet, with all the mirth  
Of all the summers since the world began,  
All strengths of rest and strife  
And love-lit love of life  
Where death has birth to wife,  
And where the sun speaks, and is heard of man :  
Yea, half the sun's bright speech is heard,  
And like the sea the soul of man gives back his word.

Earth's enkindled heart  
Bears benignant part  
In the ardent heaven's auroral pride of prime :

If ever home on earth  
Were found of heaven's grace worth  
So God-beloved a birth  
As here makes bright the fostering face of time,  
Here, heaven bears witness, might such grace  
Fall fragrant as the dewfall on that brightening face.

Here, for mine and me,  
All that eyes may see  
Hath more than all the wide world else of good,  
All nature else of fair :  
Here as none elsewhere  
Heaven is the circling air,  
Heaven is the homestead, heaven the wold, the  
wood :  
The fragrance with the shadow spread  
From broadening wings of cedars breathes of dawn's  
bright bed.

Once a dawn rose here  
More divine and dear,  
Rose on a birth-bed brighter far than dawn's,  
Whence all the summer grew  
Sweet as when earth was new  
And pure as Eden's dew :  
And yet its light lives on these lustrous lawns,  
Clings round these wildwood ways, and cleaves  
To the aisles of shadow and sun that wind unweaves  
and weaves.

Thoughts that smile and weep,  
Dreams that hallow sleep,  
Brood in the branching shadows of the trees,

Tall trees at agelong rest  
Wherein the centuries nest,  
Whence, blest as these are blest,  
We part, and part not from delight in these ;  
Whose comfort, sleeping as awake,  
We bear about within us as when first it spake.

Comfort as of song  
Grown with time more strong,  
Made perfect and prophetic as the sea,  
Whose message, when it lies  
Far off our hungering eyes,  
Within us prophesies  
Of life not ours, yet ours as theirs may be  
Whose souls far off us shine and sing  
As ere they sprang back sunward, swift as fire might  
spring.

All this oldworld pleasance  
Hails a hallowing presence,  
And thrills with sense of more than summer near,  
And lifts toward heaven more high  
The song-surpassing cry  
Of rapture that July  
Lives, for her love who makes it loveliest here ;  
For joy that she who here first drew  
The breath of life she gave me breathes it here  
anew.

Never birthday born  
Highest in height of morn  
Whereout the star looks forth that leads the sun

Shone higher in love's account,  
Still seeing the mid noon mount  
From the eager dayspring's fount  
Each year more lustrous, each like all in one ;  
Whose light around us and above  
We could not see so lovely save by grace of love.

## BARKING HALL: A YEAR AFTER

STILL the sovereign trees  
 Make the sundawn's breeze  
 More bright, more sweet, more heavenly than it  
     rose,  
 As wind and sun fulfil  
 Their living rapture : still  
 Noon, dawn, and evening thrill  
 With radiant change the immeasurable repose  
     Wherewith the woodland wilds lie blest  
 And feel how storms and centuries rock them still to  
     rest.

Still the love-lit place  
 Given of God such grace  
 That here was born on earth a birth divine  
     Gives thanks with all its flowers  
     Through all their lustrous hours,  
     From all its birds and bowers  
 Gives thanks that here they felt her sunset shine  
     Where once her sunrise laughed, and bade  
 The life of all the living things it lit be glad.

Soft as light and strong  
 Rises yet their song  
 And thrills with pride the cedar-crested lawn



And every brooding dove.  
 But she, beloved above  
 All utterance known of love,  
 Abides no more the change of night and dawn,  
 Beholds no more with earth-born eye  
 These woods that watched her waking here where all  
 things die.

Not the light that shone  
 When she looked thereon  
 Shines on them or shall shine for ever here.  
 We know not, save when sleep  
 Slays death, who fain would keep  
 His mystery dense and deep,  
 Where shines the smile we held and hold so dear.  
 Dreams only, thrilled and filled with love,  
 Bring back its light ere dawn leave nought alive  
 above.

Nought alive awake  
 Sees the strong dawn break  
 On all the dreams that dying night bade live.  
 Yet scarce the intolerant sense  
 Of day's harsh evidence  
 How came their word and whence  
 Strikes dumb the song of thanks it bids them give,  
 The joy that answers as it heard  
 And lightens as it saw the light that spake the word.

Night and sleep and dawn  
 Pass with dreams withdrawn :  
 But higher above them far than noon may climb

Love lives and turns to light  
The deadly noon of night.

His fiery spirit of sight

Endures no curb of change or darkling time.

Even earth and transient things of earth

Even here to him bear witness not of death but birth.

## MUSIC: AN ODE

## I

Was it light that spake from the darkness, or music  
 that shone from the word,  
 When the night was enkindled with sound of the  
 sun or the first-born bird ?  
 Souls enthralled and entrammelled in bondage of  
 seasons that fall and rise,  
 Bound fast round with the fetters of flesh, and blinded  
 with light that dies,  
 Lived not surely till music spake, and the spirit of  
 life was heard.

## II

Music, sister of sunrise, and herald of life to be,  
 Smiled as dawn on the spirit of man, and the thrall  
 was free.  
 Slave of nature and serf of time, the bondman of life  
 and death,  
 Dumb with passionless patience that breathed but  
 forlorn and reluctant breath,  
 Heard, beheld, and his soul made answer, and com-  
 muned aloud with the sea.

## III

Morning spake, and he heard : and the passionate  
silent noon

Kept for him not silence : and soft from the mount-  
ing moon

Fell the sound of her splendour, heard as dawn's in  
the breathless night,

Not of men but of birds whose note bade man's soul  
quicken and leap to light :

And the song of it spake, and the light and the dark-  
ness of earth were as chords in tune.

## THE CENTENARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE NILE

AUGUST 1898

*'Horatio Nelson—Honor est a Nilo'*

A HUNDRED years have lightened and have waned  
Since ancient Nile by grace of Nelson gained  
A glory higher in story now than time  
Saw when his kings were gods that raged and reigned.

The day that left even England more sublime  
And higher on heights that none but she may climb  
Abides above all shock of change-born chance  
Where hope and memory hear the stars keep chime.

The strong and sunbright lie whose name was France  
Arose against the sun of truth, whose glance  
Laughed large from the eyes of England, fierce as  
fire  
Whence eyes wax blind that gaze on truth askance.

A name above all names of heroes, higher  
Than song may sound or heart of man aspire,  
Rings as the very voice that speaks the sea  
To-day from all the sea's enkindling lyre.

The sound that bids the soul of silence be  
Fire, and a rapturous music, speaks, and we  
Hear what the sea's heart utters, wide and far :  
“ This was his day, and this day's light was he.”

O sea, our sea that hadst him for thy star,  
A hundred years that fall upon thee are  
Even as a hundred flakes of rain or snow :  
No storm of battle signs thee with a scar.

But never more may ship that sails thee show,  
But never may the sun that loves thee know,  
But never may thine England give thee more,  
A man whose life and death shall praise thee so.

The Nile, the sea, the battle, and the shore,  
Heard as we hear one word arise and soar,  
Beheld one name above them tower and glow—  
Nelson : a light that time bows down before.

## TRAFALGAR DAY

SEA, that art ours as we are thine, whose name  
Is one with England's even as light with flame,  
Dost thou as we, thy chosen of all men, know  
This day of days when death gave life to fame?

Dost thou not kindle above and thrill below  
With rapturous record, with memorial glow,  
Remembering this thy festal day of fight,  
And all the joy it gave, and all the woe?

Never since day broke flowerlike forth of night  
Broke such a dawn of battle. Death in sight  
Made of the man whose life was like the sun  
A man more godlike than the lord of light.

There is none like him, and there shall be none.  
When England bears again as great a son,  
He can but follow fame where Nelson led.  
There is not and there cannot be but one.

As earth has but one England, crown and head  
Of all her glories till the sun be dead,  
Supreme in peace and war, supreme in song,  
Supreme in freedom, since her rede was read,



Since first the soul that gave her speech grew strong  
To help the right and heal the wild world's wrong,  
So she hath but one royal Nelson, born  
To reign on time above the years that throng.

The music of his name puts fear to scorn,  
And thrills our twilight through with sense of morn :  
As England was, how should not England be ?  
No tempest yet has left her banner torn.

No year has yet put out the day when he  
Who lived and died to keep our kingship free  
Wherever seas by warring winds are worn  
Died, and was one with England and the sea.

*October 21, 1895.*

CROMWELL'S STATUE<sup>1</sup>

WHAT needs our Cromwell stone or bronze to say  
 His was the light that lit on England's way  
 The sundawn of her time-compelling power,  
 The noontide of her most imperial day?

His hand won back the sea for England's dower ;  
 His footfall bade the Moor change heart and cower ;  
 His word on Milton's tongue spake law to France  
 When Piedmont felt the she-wolf Rome devour.

From Cromwell's eyes the light of England's glance  
 Flashed, and bowed down the kings by grace of  
 chance,

The priest-anointed princes ; one alone  
 By grace of England held their hosts in trance.

The enthroned Republic from her kinglier throne  
 Spake, and her speech was Cromwell's. Earth has  
 known

No lordlier presence. How should Cromwell stand  
 With kinglets and with queenlings hewn in stone?

<sup>1</sup> Refused by the party of reaction and disunion in the House of Commons on the 17th of June, 1895.

Incarnate England in his warrior hand  
Smote, and as fire devours the blackening brand  
    Made ashes of their strengths who wrought her  
        wrong,  
And turned the strongholds of her foes to sand.

His praise is in the sea's and Milton's song ;  
What praise could reach him from the weakling  
    throng  
    That rules by leave of tongues whose praise is  
        shame—  
Him, who made England out of weakness strong ?

There needs no clarion's blast of broad-blown fame  
To bid the world bear witness whence he came  
    Who bade fierce Europe fawn at England's heel  
And purged the plague of lineal rule with flame.

There needs no witness graven on stone or steel  
For one whose work bids fame bow down and kneel ;  
    Our man of men, whose time-commanding name  
Speaks England, and proclaims her Commonweal.

*June 20, 1895*

## A WORD FOR THE NAVY

## I

QUEEN born of the sea, that hast borne her  
 The mightiest of seamen on earth,  
 Bright England, whose glories adorn her  
 And bid her rejoice in thy birth  
 As others made mothers  
 Rejoice in births sublime,  
 She names thee, she claims thee,  
 The lordliest child of time.

## II

All hers is the praise of thy story,  
 All thine is the love of her choice  
 The light of her waves is thy glory,  
 The sound of thy soul is her voice.  
 They fear it who hear it  
 And love not truth nor thee :  
 They sicken, heart-stricken,  
 Who see and would not see.

## III

The lords of thy fate, and thy keepers  
 Whose charge is the strength of thy ships,  
 If now they be dreamers and sleepers,  
 Or sluggards with lies at their lips,

Thy haters and traitors,  
False friends or foes descried,  
Might scatter and shatter  
Too soon thy princely pride.

## IV

Dark Muscovy, reptile in rancour,  
Base Germany, blatant in guile,  
Lay wait for thee riding at anchor  
On waters that whisper and smile.  
They deem thee or dream thee  
Less living now than dead,  
Deep sunken and drunken  
With sleep whence fear has fled.

## V

And what though thy song as thine action  
Wax faint, and thy place be not known,  
While faction is grappling with faction,  
Twin curs with thy corpse for a bone?  
They care not, who spare not  
The noise of pens or throats ;  
Who bluster and muster  
Blind ranks and bellowing votes.

## VI

Let populace jangle with peerage  
And ministers shuffle their mobs ;  
Mad pilots who reck not of steerage  
Though tempest ahead of them throbs.  
That throbbing and sobbing  
Of wind and gradual wave  
They hear not and fear not  
Who guide thee toward thy grave.

## VII

No clamour of cries or of parties  
Is worth but a whisper from thee,  
While only the trust of thy heart is  
At one with the soul of the sea.  
In justice her trust is  
Whose time her tidestreams keep ;  
They sink not, they shrink not,  
Time casts them not on sleep.

## VIII

Sleep thou : for thy past was so royal,  
Love hardly would bid thee take heed  
Were Russia not faithful and loyal  
Nor Germany guiltless of greed.  
No nation, in station  
Of story less than thou,  
Re-risen from prison,  
Can stand against thee now.

## IX

Sleep on : is the time not a season  
For strong men to slumber and sleep,  
And wise men to palter with treason ?  
And that they sow tares, shall they reap ?  
The wages of ages  
Wherein men smiled and slept,  
Fame fails them, shame veils them,  
Their record is not kept.



## X

Nay, whence is it then that we know it,  
What wages were theirs, and what fame?  
Deep voices of prophet and poet  
Bear record against them of shame.  
Death, starker and darker  
Than seals the graveyard grate,  
Entombs them and dooms them  
To darkness deep as fate.

## XI

But thou, though the world should misdoubt thee,  
Be strong as the seas at thy side;  
Bind on but thine armour about thee,  
That girds thee with power and with pride.  
Where Drake stood, where Blake stood,  
Where fame sees Nelson stand,  
Stand thou too, and now too  
Take thou thy fate in hand.

## XII

At the gate of the sea, in the gateway,  
They stood as the guards of thy gate;  
Take now but thy strengths to thee straightway,  
Though late, we will deem it not late.  
Thy story, thy glory,  
The very soul of thee,  
It rose not, it grows not,  
It comes not save by sea.



## NORTHUMBERLAND

BETWEEN our eastward and our westward sea  
 The narrowing strand  
 Clasps close the noblest shore fame holds in fee  
 Even here where English birth seals all men free—  
 Northumberland.

The sea-mists meet across it when the snow  
 Clothes moor and fell,  
 And bid their true-born hearts who love it glow  
 For joy that none less nobly born may know  
 What love knows well.

The splendour and the strength of storm and fight  
 Sustain the song  
 That filled our fathers' hearts with joy to smite,  
 To live, to love, to lay down life that right  
 Might tread down wrong.

They warred, they sang, they triumphed, and they  
 passed,  
 And left us glad  
 Here to be born, their sons, whose hearts hold fast  
 The proud old love no change can overcast,  
 No chance leave sad.

None save our northmen ever, none but we,  
Met, pledged, or fought  
Such foes and friends as Scotland and the sea  
With heart so high and equal, strong in glee  
And stern in thought.

Thought, fed from time's memorial springs with pride,  
Made strong as fire  
Their hearts who hurled the foe down Flodden side,  
And hers who rode the waves none else durst ride—  
None save her sire.

O land beloved, where nought of legend's dream  
Outshines the truth,  
Where Joyous Gard, closed round with clouds that  
gleam  
For them that know thee not, can scarce but seem  
Too sweet for sooth,

Thy sons forget not, nor shall fame forget,  
The deed there done  
Before the walls whose fabled fame is yet  
A light too sweet and strong to rise and set  
With moon and sun.

Song bright as flash of swords or oars that shine  
Through light or foam  
Stirs yet the blood thou hast given thy sons like  
wine  
To hail in each bright ballad hailed as thine  
One heart, one home.

Our Collingwood, though Nelson be not ours,  
By him shall stand  
Immortal, till those waifs of oldworld hours,  
Forgotten, leave uncrowned with bays and flowers  
Northumberland.

## STRATFORD-ON-AVON

JUNE 27, 1901

BE glad in heaven above all souls insphered,  
Most royal and most loyal born of men,  
Shakespeare, of all on earth beloved or feared  
Or worshipped, highest in sight of human ken.  
The homestead hallowed by thy sovereign birth,  
Whose name, being one with thine, stands higher  
than Rome,

Forgets not how of all on English earth  
Their trust is holiest, there who have their home.  
Stratford is thine and England's. None that hate  
The commonweal whose empire sets men free  
Find comfort there, where once by grace of fate  
A soul was born as boundless as the sea.

If life, if love, if memory now be thine,  
Rejoice that still thy Stratford bears thy sign.

## BURNS : AN ODE

A FIRE of fierce and laughing light  
 That clove the shuddering heart of night  
 Leapt earthward, and the thunder's might  
     That pants and yearns  
 Made fitful music round its flight :  
     And earth saw Burns.

The joyous lightning found its voice  
 And bade the heart of wrath rejoice  
 And scorn uplift a song to voice  
     The imperial hate  
 That smote the God of base men's choice  
     At God's own gate.

Before the shrine of dawn, wherethrough  
 The lark rang rapture as she flew,  
 It flashed and fired the darkling dew :  
     And all that heard  
 With love or loathing hailed anew  
     A new day's word.

The servants of the lord of hell,  
As though their lord had blessed them, fell  
Foaming at mouth for fear, so well  
    They knew the lie  
Wherewith they sought to scan and spell  
    The unsounded sky.

And Calvin, night's prophetic bird,  
Out of his home in hell was heard  
Shrieking ; and all the fens were stirred  
    Whence plague is bred ;  
Can God endure the scoffer's word ?  
    But God was dead.

The God they made them in despite  
Of man and woman, love and light,  
Strong sundawn and the starry night,  
    The lie supreme,  
Shot through with song, stood forth to sight  
    A devil's dream.

And he that bent the lyric bow  
And laid the lord of darkness low  
And bade the fire of laughter glow  
    Across his grave,  
And bade the tides above it flow,  
    Wave hurtling wave,

Shall he not win from latter days  
More than his own could yield of praise ?  
Ay, could the sovereign singer's bays  
    Forsake his brow,  
The warrior's, won on stormier ways,  
    Still clasp it now.

He loved, and sang of love : he laughed,  
And bade the cup whereout he quaffed  
Shine as a planet, fore and aft,  
    And left and right,  
And keen as shoots the sun's first shaft  
    Against the night.

But love and wine were moon and sun  
For many a fame long since undone,  
And sorrow and joy have lost and won  
    By stormy turns  
As many a singer's soul, if none  
    More bright than Burns.

And sweeter far in grief or mirth  
Have songs as glad and sad of birth  
Found voice to speak of wealth or dearth  
    In joy of life :  
But never song took fire from earth  
    More strong for strife.

The daisy by his ploughshare cleft,  
The lips of women loved and left,  
The griefs and joys that weave the weft  
    Of human time,  
With craftsman's cunning, keen and deft,  
    He carved in rhyme.

But Chaucer's daisy shines a star  
Above his ploughshare's reach to mar,  
And mightier vision gave Dunbar  
    More strenuous wing  
To hear around all sins that are  
    Hell dance and sing.



And when such pride and power of trust  
In song's high gift to arouse from dust  
Death, and transfigure love or lust  
    Through smiles or tears  
In golden speech that takes no rust  
    From cankering years,

As never spake but once in one  
Strong star-crossed child of earth and sun,  
Villon, made music such as none  
    May praise or blame,  
A crown of starrier flower was won  
    Than Burns may claim.

But never, since bright earth was born  
In rapture of the enkindling morn,  
Might godlike wrath and sunlike scorn  
    That was and is  
And shall be while false weeds are worn  
    Find word like his.

Above the rude and radiant earth  
That heaves and glows from firth to firth  
In vale and mountain, bright in dearth  
    And warm in wealth,  
Which gave his fiery glory birth  
    By chance and stealth,

Above the storms of praise and blame  
That blur with mist his lustrous name,  
His thunderous laughter went and came,  
    And lives and flies ;  
The roar that follows on the flame  
    When lightning dies.

Earth, and the snow-dimmed heights of air,  
And water winding soft and fair  
Through still sweet places, bright and bare,  
By bent and byre,  
Taught him what hearts within them were :  
But his was fire.

## THE COMMONWEAL

### A SONG FOR UNIONISTS

MEN, whose fathers braved the world in arms against  
 our isles in union,  
 Men, whose brothers met rebellion face to face,  
 Show the hearts ye have, if worthy long descent and  
 high communion,  
 Show the spirits, if unbroken, of your race.

What are these that howl and hiss across the strait  
 of westward water?

What is he who floods our ears with speech in  
 flood?

See the long tongue lick the dripping hand that  
 smokes and reeks of slaughter!

See the man of words embrace the man of blood!

Hear the plea whereby the tonguester mocks and  
 charms the gazing gaper—

“ We are they whose works are works of love and  
 peace ;

Till disunion bring forth union, what is union, sirs,  
 but paper ?

Break and rend it, then shall trust and strength  
 increase.”

Who would fear to trust a double-faced but single-hearted dreamer,

Pure of purpose, clean of hand, and clear of guile?

“Life is well-nigh spent,” he sighs; “you call me shuffler, trickster, schemer?

I am old—when young men yell at me, I smile.”

Many a year that priceless light of life has trembled,  
we remember,

On the platform of extinction—unextinct;

Many a month has been for him the long year's last—  
life's calm December:

Can it be that he who said so, saying so, winked?

No; the lust of life, the thirst for work and days with  
work to do in,

Drove and drives him down the road of splendid  
shame;

All is well, if o'er the monument recording England's  
ruin

Time shall read, inscribed in triumph, Gladstone's  
name.

Thieves and murderers, hands yet red with blood and  
tongues yet black with lies,

Clap and clamour—“Parnell spurs his Gladstone  
well!”

Truth, unscared and undeluded by their praise or  
blame, replies—

“Is the goal of fraud and bloodshed heaven or  
hell?”

Old men eloquent, who truckle to the traitors of the  
time,

Love not office—power is no desire of theirs:

What if yesterday their hearts recoiled from blood  
and fraud and crime?

Conscience erred—an error which to-day repairs.

Conscience only now convinces them of strange  
though transient error:

Only now they see how fair is treason's face;

See how true the falsehood, just the theft, and  
blameless is the terror,

Which replaces just and blameless men in place.

Place and time decide the right and wrong of thought  
and word and action;

Crime is black as hell, till virtue gain its vote;

Then—but ah, to think or say so smacks of fraud or  
smells of faction!—

Mercy holds the door while Murder hacks the throat.

Murder? Treason? Theft? Poor brothers who  
succumb to such temptations,

Shall we lay on you or take on us the blame?

Reason answers, and religion echoes round to  
wondering nations,

“Not with Ireland, but with England rests the  
shame.”

Reason speaks through mild religion's organ, loud  
and long and lusty—

Profit speaks through lips of patriots pure and  
true—

“English friends, whose trust we ask for, has not  
England found us trusty?

Not for us we seek advancement, but for you.

“ Far and near the world bears witness of our  
wisdom, courage, honour ;

Egypt knows if there our fame burns bright or dim.  
Let but England trust as Gordon trusted, soon shall  
come upon her

Such deliverance as our daring brought on him.

“ Far and wide the world rings record of our faith,  
our constant dealing,

Love of country, truth to friends, contempt for foes.  
Sign once more the bond of trust in us that here  
awaits but sealing,

We will give yet more than all our record shows.

“ Perfect ruin, shame eternal, everlasting degrada-  
tion,

Freedom bought and sold, truth bound and treason  
free.”

Yet an hour is here for answer ; now, if here be yet  
a nation,

Answer, England, man by man from sea to sea !

*June 30, 1886.*



## THE QUESTION

1887

SHALL England consummate the crime  
 That binds the murderer's hand, and leaves  
 No surety for the trust of thieves?  
 Time pleads against it—truth and time—  
 And pity frowns and grieves.

The hoary henchman of the gang  
 Lifts hands that never dew nor rain  
 May cleanse from Gordon's blood again,  
 Appealing : pity's tenderest pang  
 Thrills his pure heart with pain.

Grand helmsman of the clamorous crew,  
 The good grey recreant quakes and weeps  
 To think that crime no longer creeps  
 Safe toward its end : that murderers too  
 May die when mercy sleeps.

While all the lives were innocent  
 That slaughter drank, and laughed with rage,  
 Bland virtue sighed, " A former age  
 Taught murder : souls long discontent  
 Can aught save blood assuage ?



“ You blame not Russian hands that smite  
By fierce and secret ways the power  
That leaves not life one chainless hour ;  
Have these than they less natural right  
To claim life's natural dower ?

“ The dower that freedom brings the slave  
She weds, is vengeance : why should we,  
Whom equal laws acclaim as free,  
Think shame, if men too blindly brave  
Steal, murder, skulk, and flee ?

“ At kings they strike in Russia : there  
Men take their life in hand who slay  
Kings : these, that have not heart to lay  
Hand save on girls whose ravaged hair  
Is made the patriot's prey,

“ These, whom the sight of old men slain  
Makes bold to bid their children die,  
Starved, if they hold not peace, nor lie,  
Claim loftier praise : could others deign  
To stand in shame so high ?

“ Could others deign to dare such deeds  
As holiest Ireland hallows ? Nay,  
But justice then makes plain our way :  
Be laws burnt up like burning weeds  
That vex the face of day.

“ Shall bloodmongers be held of us  
Blood-guilty ? Hands reached out for gold  
Whereon blood rusts not yet, we hold  
Bloodless and blameless : ever thus  
Have good men held of old.

“ Fair Freedom, fledged and impeded with lies,  
Takes flight by night where murder lurks,  
And broods on murderous ways and works,  
Yet seems not hideous in our eyes  
As Austrians or as Turks.

“ Be it ours to undo a woful past,  
To bid the bells of concord chime,  
To break the bonds of suffering crime,  
Slack now, that some would make more fast :  
Such teaching comes of time.”

So pleads the gentlest heart that lives,  
Whose pity, pitiless for all  
Whom darkling terror holds in thrall,  
Toward none save miscreants yearns, and gives  
Alms of warm tears—and gall.

Hear, England, and obey : for he  
Who claims thy trust again to-day  
Is he who left thy sons a prey  
To shame whence only death sets free :  
Hear, England, and obey.

Thy spoils he gave to deck the Dutch ;  
Thy noblest pride, most pure, most brave,  
To death forlorn and sure he gave ;  
Nor now requires he overmuch  
Who bids thee dig thy grave.

Dig deep the grave of shame, wherein  
Thy fame, thy commonweal, must lie ;  
Put thought of aught save terror by ;  
To strike and slay the slayer is sin ;  
And Murder must not die.

Bind fast the true man ; loose the thief ;  
Shamed were the land, the laws accursed,  
Were guilt, not innocence, amerced ;  
And dark the wrong and sore the grief,  
Were tyrants too coerced.

The fiercest cowards that ever skulked,  
The cowardliest hounds that ever lapped  
Blood, if their horde be tracked and trapped,  
And justice claim their lives for mulct,  
Gnash teeth that flashed and snapped.

Bow down for fear, then, England : bow,  
Lest worse befall thee yet ; and swear  
That nought save pity, conscience, care  
For truth and mercy, moves thee now  
To call foul falsehood fair.

So shalt thou live in shame, and hear  
The lips of all men laugh thee dead ;  
The wide world's mockery round thy head  
Shriek like a storm-wind : and a bier  
Shall be thine honour's bed.

## APOSTASY

*Et Judas m'a dit : Traître !*—VICTOR HUGO

## I

TRUTHS change with time, and terms with truth.

To-day

A statesman worships union, and to-night

Disunion. Shame to have sinned against the  
light

Confounds not but impels his tongue to unsay

What yestereve he swore. Should fear make way

For treason ? honour change her livery ? fright

Clasp hands with interest ? wrong pledge faith  
with right ?

Religion, mercy, conscience, answer—Yea.

To veer is not to veer : when votes are weighed,

The numerous tongue approves him renegade

Who cannot change his banner : he that can

Sits crowned with wreaths of praise too pure to fade.

Truth smiles applause on treason's poisonous  
plan :

And Cleon is an honourable man.

## II

Pure faith, fond hope, sweet love, with God for guide,

Move now the men whose blameless error cast

In prison (ah, but love condones the past !)

Their subject knaves that were—their lords that ride

Now laughing on their necks, and now bestride  
 Their vassal backs in triumph. Faith stands fast  
 Though fear haul down the flag that crowned her  
     mast  
 And hope and love proclaim that truth has lied.

Turn, turn, and turn—so bids the still small voice,  
 The changeless voice of honour. He that stands  
 Where all his life he stood, with bribeless hands,  
 With tongue unhired to mourn, reprove, rejoice,  
 Curse, bless, forswear, and swear again, and lie,  
 Stands proven apostate in the apostate's eye.

## III

Fraud shrinks from faith : at sight of swans, the raven  
 Chides blackness, and the snake recoils aghast  
 In fear of poison when a bird flies past.  
 Thersites brands Achilles as a craven ;  
 The shoal fed full with shipwreck blames the haven  
 For murderous lust of lives devoured, and vast  
 Desire of doom whose feast is mercy's fast :  
 And Bacon sees the traitor's mark engraven  
 Full on the front of Essex. Grief and shame  
 Obscure the chaste and sunlike spirit of Oates  
 At thought of Russell's treason ; and the name  
 Of Milton sickens with superb disgust  
 The heaving heart of Waller. Wisdom dotes,  
 If wisdom turns not tail and licks not dust.

## IV

The sole sweet land found fit to wed the sea,  
 With reptile rebels at her heel of old,  
 Set hard her heel upon them, and controlled  
 The cowering poisonous peril. How should she

Cower, and resign her trust of empire? Free  
As winds and waters live the loyal-souled  
And true-born sons that love her : nay, the bold  
Base knaves who curse her name have leave to be  
The loud-tongued liars they are. For she, beyond  
All woful years that bid men's hearts despond,  
Sees yet the likeness of her ancient fame  
Burn from the heavenward heights of history, hears  
Not Leicester's name but Sidney's—faith's, not  
fear's—  
Not Gladstone's now but only Gordon's name.



## RUSSIA : AN ODE

1890

## I

OUT of hell a word comes hissing, dark as doom,  
 Fierce as fire, and foul as plague-polluted gloom ;  
 Out of hell wherein the sinless damned endure  
 More than ever sin conceived of pains impure ;  
 More than ever ground men's living souls to dust ;  
 Worse than madness ever dreamed of murderous lust.  
 Since the world's wail first went up from lands and  
 seas

Ears have heard not, tongues have told not things  
 like these.

Dante, led by love's and hate's accordant spell  
 Down the deepest and the loathliest ways of hell,  
 Where beyond the brook of blood the rain was fire,  
 Where the scalps were masked with dung more deep  
 than mire,

Saw not, where the filth was foulest, and the night  
 Darkest, depths whose fiends could match the  
 Muscovite.

Set beside this truth, his deadliest vision seems  
 Pale and pure and painless as a virgin's dreams.



Maidens dead beneath the claspings lash, and wives  
Rent with deadlier pangs than death—for shame  
survives,  
Naked, mad, starved, scourged, spurned, frozen,  
fallen, deflowered,  
Souls and bodies as by fangs of beasts devoured,  
Sounds that hell would hear not, sights no thought  
could shape,  
Limbs that feel as flame the ravenous grasp of rape,  
Filth of raging crime and shame that crime enjoys,  
Age made one with youth in torture, girls with boys,  
These, and worse if aught be worse than these things  
are,  
Prove thee regent, Russia—praise thy mercy, Czar.

## II

Sons of man, men born of women, may we dare  
Say they sin who dare be slain and dare not spare ?  
They who take their lives in hand and smile on death,  
Holding life as less than sleep's most fitful breath,  
So their life perchance or death may serve and speed  
Faith and hope, that die if dream become not deed ?  
Nought is death and nought is life and nought is fate  
Save for souls that love has clothed with fire of hate.  
These behold them, weigh them, prove them, find  
them nought,  
Save by light of hope and fire of burning thought.  
What though sun be less than storm where these  
aspire,  
Dawn than lightning, song than thunder, light than  
fire ?  
Help is none in heaven : hope sees no gentler star :  
Earth is hell, and hell bows down before the Czar.

All its monstrous, murderous, lecherous births acclaim  
Him whose empire lives to match its fiery fame.  
Nay, perchance at sight or sense of deeds here done,  
Here where men may lift up eyes to greet the sun,  
Hell recoils heart-stricken : horror worse than hell  
Darkens earth and sickens heaven ; life knows the  
spell,  
Shudders, quails, and sinks—or, filled with fierier  
breath,  
Rises red in arms devised of darkling death.  
Pity mad with passion, anguish mad with shame,  
Call aloud on justice by her darker name ;  
Love grows hate for love's sake ; life takes death for  
guide.  
Night hath none but one red star—Tyrannicide.

## III

“ God or man, be swift ; hope sickens with delay :  
Smite, and send him howling down his father's  
way !  
Fall, O fire of heaven, and smite as fire from hell  
Halls wherein men's torturers, crowned and cowering,  
dwell !  
These that crouch and shrink and shudder, girt with  
power—  
These that reign, and dare not trust one trembling  
hour—  
These omnipotent, whom terror curbs and drives—  
These whose life reflects in fear their victims' lives—  
These whose breath sheds poison worse than plague's  
thick breath—  
These whose reign is ruin, these whose word is death,

These whose will turns heaven to hell, and day to night,

These, if God's hand smite not, how shall man's not smite ? ”

So from hearts by horror withered as by fire

Surge the strains of unappeasable desire ;

Sounds that bid the darkness lighten, lit for death ;

Bid the lips whose breath was doom yield up their breath :

Down the way of Czars, awhile in vain deferred,

Bid the Second Alexander light the Third.

How for shame shall men rebuke them ? how may we

Blame, whose fathers died, and slew, to leave us free ?

We, though all the world cry out upon them, know,

Were our strife as theirs, we could not strike but so ;

Could not cower, and could not kiss the hands that smite ;

Could not meet them armed in sunlit battle's light.

Dark as fear and red as hate though morning rise,

Life it is that conquers ; death it is that dies.

## FOR GREECE AND CRETE

STORM and shame and fraud and darkness fill the  
 nations full with night :  
 Hope and fear whose eyes yearn eastward have but  
 fire and sword in sight :  
 One alone, whose name is one with glory, sees and  
 seeks the light.

Hellas, mother of the spirit, sole supreme in war and  
 peace,  
 Land of light, whose word remembered bids all fear  
 and sorrow cease,  
 Lives again, while freedom lightens eastward yet for  
 sons of Greece.

Greece, where only men whose manhood was as god-  
 head ever trod,  
 Bears the blind world witness yet of light wherewith  
 her feet are shod :  
 Freedom, armed of Greece was always very man and  
 very God.

Now the winds of old that filled her sails with triumph,  
when the fleet  
Bound for death from Asia fled before them stricken,  
wake to greet  
Ships full-winged again for freedom toward the sacred  
shores of Crete.

There was God born man, the song that spake of  
old time said : and there  
Man, made even as God by trust that shows him  
nought too dire to dare,  
Now may light again the beacon lit when those we  
worship were.

Sharp the concert wrought of discord shrills the tune  
of shame and death,  
Turk by Christian fenced and fostered, Mecca backed  
by Nazareth :  
All the powerless powers, tongue-valiant, breathe but  
greed's or terror's breath.

Though the tide that feels the west wind lift it wave  
by widening wave  
Wax not yet to height and fullness of the storm that  
smites to save,  
None shall bid the flood back seaward till no bar be  
left to brave.

## DELPHIC HYMN TO APOLLO

(B.C. 280)

DONE INTO ENGLISH

## I

THEE, the son of God most high,  
 Famed for harping song, will I  
 Proclaim, and the deathless oracular word  
 From the snow-topped rock that we gaze on heard,  
 Counsels of thy glorious giving  
 Manifest for all men living,  
 How thou madest the tripod of prophecy thine  
 Which the wrath of the dragon kept guard on, a shrine  
 Voiceless till thy shafts could smite  
 All his live coiled glittering might.

## II

Ye that hold of right alone  
 All deep woods on Helicon,  
 Fair daughters of thunder-girt God, with your bright  
 White arms uplift as to lighten the light,  
 Come to chant your brother's praise,  
 Gold-haired Phœbus, loud in lays,  
 Even his, who afar up the twin-topped seat  
 Of the rock Parnassian whereon we meet



Risen with glorious Delphic maids  
Seeks the soft spring-sweetened shades  
Castalian, fain of the Delphian peak  
Prophetic, sublime as the feet that seek.  
Glorious Athens, highest of state,  
Come, with praise and prayer elate,  
O thou that art queen of the plain unscarred  
That the warrior Tritonid hath alway in guard,  
Where on many a sacred shrine  
Young bulls' thigh-bones burn and shine  
As the god that is fire overtakes them, and fast  
The smoke of Arabia to heavenward is cast,  
Scattering wide its balm : and shrill  
Now with nimble notes that thrill  
The flute strikes up for the song, and the harp of gold  
Strikes up to the song sweet answer : and all behold,  
All, aswarm as bees, give ear,  
Who by birth hold Athens dear.



## A NEW CENTURY

AN age too great for thought of ours to scan,  
 A wave upon the sleepless sea of time  
 That sinks and sleeps for ever, ere the chime  
 Pass that salutes with blessing, not with ban,  
 The dark year dead, the bright year born for man,  
 Dies : all its days that watched man cower and climb,  
 Frail as the foam, and as the sun sublime,  
 Sleep sound as they that slept ere these began.

Our mother earth, whose ages none may tell,  
 Puts on no change : time bids not her wax pale  
 Or kindle, quenched or quickened, when the knell  
 Sounds, and we cry across the veering gale  
 Farewell—and midnight answers us, Farewell ;  
 Hail—and the heaven of morning answers, Hail.

## AN EVENING AT VICHY

SEPTEMBER 1896

WRITTEN ON THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF LORD LEIGHTON

A LIGHT has passed that never shall pass away,  
 A sun has set whose rays are unquelled of night.  
 The loyal grace, the courtesy bright as day,  
 The strong sweet radiant spirit of life and light  
 That shone and smiled and lightened on all men's  
 sight,

The kindly life whose tune was the tune of May,  
 For us now dark, for love and for fame is bright.

Nay, not for us that live as the fen-fires live,  
 As stars that shoot and shudder with life and die,  
 Can death make dark that lustre of life, or give  
 The grievous gift of trust in oblivion's lie.  
 Days dear and far death touches, and draws them  
 nigh,

And bids the grief that broods on their graves forgive  
 The day that seems to mock them as clouds that fly.

If life be life more faithful than shines on sleep  
 When dreams take wing and lighten and fade like  
 flame,  
 Then haply death may be not a death so deep

That all things past are past for it wholly—fame,  
Love, loving-kindness, seasons that went and came,  
And left their light on life as a seal to keep  
Winged memory fast and heedful of time's dead  
claim.

Death gives back life and light to the sunless years  
Whose suns long sunken set not for ever. Time,  
Blind, fierce, and deaf as tempest, relents, and hears  
And sees how bright the days and how sweet their  
chime  
Rang, shone, and passed in music that matched  
the clime  
Wherein we met rejoicing—a joy that cheers  
Sorrow, to see the night as the dawn sublime.

The days that were outlighten the days that are,  
And eyes now darkened shine as the stars we see  
And hear not sing, impassionate star to star,  
As once we heard the music that haply he  
Hears, high in heaven if ever a voice may be  
The same in heaven, the same as on earth, afar  
From pain and earth as heaven from the heaving  
sea.

A woman's voice, divine as a bird's by dawn  
Kindled and stirred to sunward, arose and held  
Our souls that heard, from earth as from sleep with-  
drawn,  
And filled with light as stars, and as stars com-  
pelled  
To move by might of music, elate while quelled,  
Subdued by rapture, lit as a mountain lawn  
By morning whence all heaven in the sunrise welled.

And her the shadow of death as a robe clasped round  
Then : and as morning's music she passed away.  
And he then with us, warrior and wanderer, crowned  
With fame that shone from eastern on western  
day,  
More strong, more kind, than praise or than grief  
might say,  
Has passed now forth of shadow by sunlight bound,  
Of night shot through with light that is frail as  
May.

May dies, and light grows darkness, and life grows  
death :

Hope fades and shrinks and falls as a changing leaf :  
Remembrance, touched and kindled by love's live  
breath,

Shines, and subdues the shadow of time called grief,  
The shade whose length of life is as life's date brief,  
With joy that broods on the sunlight past, and saith  
That thought and love hold sorrow and change in  
fief.

Sweet, glad, bright spirit, kind as the sun seems kind  
When earth and sea rejoice in his gentler spell,  
Thy face that was we see not ; bereft and blind,  
We see but yet, rejoicing to see, and dwell  
Awhile in days that heard not the death-day's  
knell,  
A light so bright that scarcely may sorrow find  
One old sweet word that hails thee and mourns—  
Farewell.

## TO GEORGE FREDERICK WATTS

ON THE EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH,  
FEBRUARY 23 1897

HIGH thought and hallowed love, by faith made one,  
   Begot and bare the sweet strong-hearted child,  
 Art, nursed of Nature ; earth and sea and sun  
   Saw Nature then more godlike as she smiled.  
 Life smiled on death, and death on life : the Soul  
   Between them shone, and soared above their strife,  
 And left on Time's unclosed and starry scroll  
   A sign that quickened death to deathless life.  
 Peace rose like Hope, a patient queen, and bade  
   Hell's firstborn, Faith, abjure her creed and die ;  
 And Love, by life and death made sad and glad,  
   Gave Conscience ease, and watched Good Will  
     pass by.  
 All these make music now of one man's name,  
 Whose life and age are one with love and fame

## ON THE DEATH OF MRS. LYNN LINTON

KIND, wise, and true as truth's own heart,  
 A soul that here  
 Chose and held fast the better part  
 And cast out fear,

Has left us ere we dreamed of death  
 For life so strong,  
 Clear as the sundawn's light and breath,  
 And sweet as song.

We see no more what here awhile  
 Shed light on men :  
 Has Landor seen that brave bright smile  
 Alive again ?

If death and life and love be one  
 And hope no lie  
 And night no stronger than the sun,  
 These cannot die.

The father-spirit whence her soul  
 Took strength, and gave  
 Back love, is perfect yet and whole,  
 As hope might crave.



380 ON THE DEATH OF MRS. LYNN LINTON

His word is living light and fire :  
And hers shall live  
By grace of all good gifts the sire  
Gave power to give.

The sire and daughter, twain and one  
In quest and goal,  
Stand face to face beyond the sun,  
And soul to soul.

Not we, who loved them well, may dream  
What joy sublime  
Is theirs, if dawn through darkness gleam,  
And life through time.

Time seems but here the mask of death,  
That falls and shows  
A void where hope may draw not breath :  
Night only knows.

Love knows not : all that love may keep  
Glad memory gives :  
The spirit of the days that sleep  
Still wakes and lives.

But not the spirit's self, though song  
Would lend it speech,  
May touch the goal that hope might long  
In vain to reach.

How dear that high true heart, how sweet  
Those keen kind eyes,  
Love knows, who knows how fiery fleet  
Is life that flies.



If life there be that flies not, fair  
The life must be  
That thrills her sovereign spirit there  
And sets it free.

## IN MEMORY OF AURELIO SAFFI

BELOVED above all nations, land adored,  
 Sovereign in spirit and charm, by song and sword,  
     Sovereign whose life is love, whose name is light,  
 Italia, queen that hast the sun for lord,

Bride that hast heaven for bridegroom, how should  
     night

Veil or withhold from faith's and memory's sight  
     A man beloved and crowned of thee and fame,  
 Hide for an hour his name's memorial might ?

Thy sons may never speak or hear the name  
 Saffi, and feel not love's regenerate flame  
     Thrill all the quickening heart with faith and pride  
 In one whose life makes death and life the same.

They die indeed whose souls before them died :  
 Not he, for whom death flung life's portal wide,  
     Who stands where Dante's soul in vision came,  
 In Dante's presence, by Mazzini's side.

*March 26, 1896*

## CARNOT

DEATH, winged with fire of hate from deathless hell  
Wherein the souls of anarchs hiss and die,  
With stroke as dire has cloven a heart as high  
As twice beyond the wide sea's westward swell  
The living lust of death had power to quell  
Through ministry of murderous hands whereby  
Dark fate bade Lincoln's head and Garfield's lie  
Low even as his who bids his France farewell.

France, now no heart that would not weep with thee  
Loved ever faith or freedom. From thy hand  
The staff of state is broken : hope, unmanned  
With anguish, doubts if freedom's self be free.  
The snake-souled anarch's fang strikes all the land  
Cold, and all hearts unsundered by the sea.

*June 25, 1894.*

## AFTER THE VERDICT

FRANCE, cloven in twain by fire of hell and hate,  
Shamed with the shame of men her meanest born,  
Soldier and judge whose names, inscribed for scorn,  
Stand vilest on the record writ of fate,  
Lies yet not wholly vile who stood so great,  
Sees yet not all her praise of old outworn.  
Not yet is all her scroll of glory torn,  
Or left for utter shame to desecrate.  
High souls and constant hearts of faithful men  
Sustain her perfect praise with tongue and pen  
Indomitable as honour. Storms may toss  
And soil her standard ere her bark win home :  
But shame falls full upon the Christless cross  
Whose brandmark signs the holy hounds of Rome.

*September 1899.*

## THE TRANSVAAL

PATIENCE, long sick to death, is dead. Too long  
 Have sloth and doubt and treason bidden us be  
 What Cromwell's England was not, when the sea  
 To him bore witness given of Blake how strong  
 She stood, a commonweal that brooked no wrong  
 From foes less vile than men like wolves set free  
 Whose war is waged where none may fight or flee—  
 With women and with weanlings. Speech and song  
 Lack utterance now for loathing. Scarce we hear  
 Foul tongues that blacken God's dishonoured name  
 With prayers turned curses and with praise found  
 shame  
 Defy the truth whose witness now draws near  
 To scourge these dogs, agape with jaws afoam,  
 Down out of life. Strike, England, and strike  
 home.

*October 9, 1899.*

## REVERSE

THE wave that breaks against a forward stroke  
 Beats not the swimmer back, but thrills him through  
 With joyous trust to win his way anew  
 Through stronger seas than first upon him broke  
 And triumphed. England's iron-tempered oak  
 Shrank not when Europe's might against her grew  
 Full, and her sun drank up her foes like dew,  
 And lion-like from sleep her strength awoke.

As bold in fight as bold in breach of trust  
 We find our foes, and wonder not to find,  
 Nor grudge them praise whom honour may not  
 bind :  
 But loathing more intense than speaks disgust  
 Heaves England's heart, when scorn is bound to  
 greet  
 Hunters and hounds whose tongues would lick  
 their feet.

*November 1, 1899.*

## THE TURNING OF THE TIDE

STORM, strong with all the bitter heart of hate,  
 Smote England, now nineteen dark years ago,  
 As when the tide's full wrath in seaward flow  
 Smites and bears back the swimmer. Fraud and fate  
 Were leagued against her : fear was fain to prate  
 Of honour in dishonour, pride brought low,  
 And humbleness whence holiness must grow,  
 And greatness born of shame to be so great.

The winter day that withered hope and pride  
 Shines now triumphal on the turning tide  
 That sets once more our trust in freedom free,  
 That leaves a ruthless and a truthless foe  
 And all base hopes that hailed his cause laid low,  
 And England's name a light on land and sea.

*February 27, 1900.*



## ON THE DEATH OF COLONEL BENSON

NORTHUMBERLAND, so proud and sad to-day,  
     Weep and rejoice, our mother, whom no son  
     More glorious than this dead and deathless one  
 Brought ever fame whereon no time shall prey.  
 Nor heed we more than he what liars dare say  
     Of mercy's holiest duties left undone  
     Toward whelps and dams of murderous foes, whom  
         none  
 Save we had spared or feared to starve and slay.

Alone as Milton and as Wordsworth found  
 And hailed their England, when from all around  
     Howled all the recreant hate of envious knaves,  
 Sublime she stands : while, stifled in the sound,  
     Each lie that falls from German boors and slaves  
     Falls but as filth dropt in the wandering waves.

*November 4, 1901.*

## ASTRÆA VICTRIX

ENGLAND, elect of time,  
 By freedom sealed sublime,  
 And constant as the sun that saw thy dawn  
 Outshine upon the sea  
 His own in heaven, to be  
 A light that night nor day should see withdrawn,  
 If song may speak not now thy praise,  
 Fame writes it higher than song may soar or faith  
 may gaze.

Dark months on months beheld  
 Hope thwarted, crossed, and quelled,  
 And heard the heartless hounds of hatred bay  
 Aloud against thee, glad  
 As now their souls are sad  
 Who see their hope in hatred pass away  
 And wither into shame and fear  
 And shudder down to darkness, loth to see or hear.

Nought now they hear or see  
 That speaks or shows not thee  
 Triumphant ; not as empires reared of yore,  
 The imperial commonweal  
 That bears thy sovereign seal

And signs thine orient as thy natural shore  
Free, as no sons but thine may stand,  
Steers lifeward ever, guided of thy pilot hand.

Fear, masked and veiled by fraud,  
Found shameful time to applaud  
Shame, and bow down thy banner towards the  
dust,  
And cail on godly shame  
To desecrate thy name  
And bid false penitence abjure thy trust :  
Till England's heart took thought at last,  
And felt her future kindle from her fiery past.

Then sprang the sunbright fire  
High as the sun, and higher  
Than strange men's eyes might watch it undis-  
mayed :  
But winds athwart it blew  
Storm, and the twilight grew  
Darkness awhile, an unenduring shade :  
And all base birds and beasts of night  
Saw no more England now to fear, no loathsome light.

All knaves and slaves at heart  
Who, knowing thee what thou art,  
Abhor thee, seeing what none save here may see,  
Strong freedom, taintless truth,  
Supreme in ageless youth,  
Howled all their hate and hope aloud at thee  
While yet the wavering wind of strife  
Bore hard against her sail whose freight is hope and  
life.

And now the quickening tide  
That brings back power and pride  
To faith and love whose ensign is thy name  
Bears down the recreant lie  
That doomed thy name to die,  
Sons, friends, and foes behold thy star the same  
As when it stood in heaven a sun  
And Europe saw no glory left her sky save one.

And now, as then she saw,  
She sees with shamefast awe  
How all unlike all slaves and tyrants born  
Where bondmen champ the bit  
And anarchs foam and flit,  
And day mocks day, and year puts year to scorn,  
Our mother bore us, English men,  
Ashamed of shame and strong in mercy, now as then.

We loosed not on these knaves  
Their scourge-tormented slaves :  
We held the hand that fain had risen to smite  
The torturer fast, and made  
Justice awhile afraid,  
And righteousness forego her ruthless right :  
We warred not even with these as they ;  
We bade not them they preyed on make of them their  
prey.

All murderous fraud that lurks  
In hearts where hell's craft works  
Fought, crawled, and slew in darkness : they that  
died  
Dreamed not of foes too base  
For scorn to grant them grace :

Men wounded, women, children at their side,  
Had found what faith in fiends may live :  
And yet we gave not back what righteous doom would  
give.

No false white flag that fawns  
On faith till murder dawns  
Blood-red from hell-black treason's heart of hate  
Left ever shame's foul brand  
Seared on an English hand :  
And yet our pride vouchsafes them grace too great  
For other pride to dream of : scorn  
Strikes retribution silent as the stars at morn.

And now the living breath  
Whose life puts death to death,  
Freedom, whose name is England, stirs and  
thrills  
The burning darkness through  
Whence fraud and slavery grew,  
We scarce may mourn our dead whose fame fulfils  
The record where her foes have read  
That earth shall see none like her born ere earth be  
dead.

## THE FIRST OF JUNE

PEACE and war are one in proof of England's death-  
less praise.

One divine day saw her foemen scattered on the  
sea

Far and fast as storm could speed : the same strong  
day of days

Sees the imperial commonweal set friends and foe-  
men free.

Save where freedom reigns, whose name is England,  
fraud and fear

Grind and blind the face of men who look on her  
and lie :

Now may truth and pride in truth, whose seat of old  
was here,

See them shamed and stricken blind and dumb as  
worms that die.

Even before our hallowed hawthorn-blossom pass and  
cease,

Even as England shines and smiles at last upon  
the sun,

Comes the word that means for England more than  
passing peace,

Peace with honour, peace with pride in righteous  
work well done.

Crowned with flowers the first of all the world and  
all the year,

Peace, whose name is one with honour born of war,  
is here.



## ROUNDEL

FROM THE FRENCH OF VILLON

DEATH, I would plead against thy wrong,  
Who hast reft me of my love, my wife,  
And art not satiate yet with strife,  
But needs wilt hold me lingering long.  
No strength since then has kept me strong :  
But what could hurt thee in her life,  
Death ?

Twain we were, and our hearts one song,  
One heart : if that be dead, thy knife  
Hath cut me off alive from life,  
Dead as the carver's figured throng,  
Death !

## A ROUNDEL OF RABELAIS

THELEME is afar on the waters, adrift and afar,  
 Afar and afloat on the waters that flicker and gleam,  
 And we feel but her fragrance and see but the  
     shadows that mar  
     Theleme.

In the sun-coloured mists of the sunrise and sunset  
     that steam  
 As incense from urns of the twilight, her portals ajar  
 Let pass as a shadow the light of the sound of a  
     dream.

But the laughter that rings from her cloisters that  
     know not a bar  
 So kindles delight in desire that the souls in us deem  
 He erred not, the seer who discerned on the seas as  
     a star  
     Theleme.

## LUCIFER

*Écrasez l'infâme.*—VOLTAIRE*Les prêtres ont raison de l'appeler Lucifer.*—VICTOR HUGO

VOLTAIRE, our England's lover, man divine  
 Beyond all Gods that ever fear adored  
 By right and might, by sceptre and by sword,  
 By godlike love of sunlike truth, made thine  
 Through godlike hate of falsehood's marshlight shine  
 And all the fume of creeds and deeds abhorred  
 Whose light was darkness, till the dawn-star  
     soared,  
 Truth, reason, mercy, justice, keep thy shrine  
 Sacred in memory's temple, seeing that none  
 Of all souls born to strive before the sun  
     Loved ever good or hated evil more.  
 The snake that felt thy heel upon her head,  
 Night's first-born, writhes as though she were not  
     dead,  
 But strikes not, stings not, slays not as before.

## THE CENTENARY OF ALEXANDRE DUMAS

SOUND of trumpets blowing down the merriest winds  
of morn,

Flash of hurtless lightnings, laugh of thunders  
loud and glad,

Here should hail the summer day whereon a light  
was born

Whence the sun grew brighter, seeing the world  
less dark and sad.

Man of men by right divine of boyhood everlasting,  
France incarnate, France immortal in her deathless  
boy,

Brighter birthday never shone than thine on earth,  
forecasting

More of strenuous mirth in manhood, more of  
manful joy.

Child of warriors, friend of warriors, Garibaldi's  
friend,

Even thy name is as the splendour of a sunbright  
sword :

While the boy's heart beats in man, thy fame shall  
find not end :

Time and dark oblivion bow before thee as their  
lord.

Youth acclaims thee gladdest of the gods that gild  
his days :

Age gives thanks for thee, and death lacks heart to  
quench thy praise.

## AT A DOG'S GRAVE

### I

GOOD NIGHT, we say, when comes the time to win  
 The daily death divine that shuts up sight,  
 Sleep, that assures for all who dwell therein  
                     Good night.

The shadow shed round those we love shines bright  
 As love's own face, when death, sleep's gentler twin,  
 From them divides us even as night from light.

Shall friends born lower in life, though pure of sin,  
 Though clothed with love and faith to usward plight,  
 Perish and pass unbidden of us, their kin,  
                     Good night ?

### II

To die a dog's death once was held for shame.  
 Not all men so beloved and mourned shall lie  
 As many of these, whose time untimely came  
                     To die.

His years were full : his years were joyous : why  
 Must love be sorrow, when his gracious name  
 Recalls his lovely life of limb and eye ?

If aught of blameless life on earth may claim  
Life higher than death, though death's dark wave  
    rise high,  
Such life as this among us never came  
    To die.

## III

White violets, there by hands more sweet than they  
Planted, shall sweeten April's flowerful air  
About a grave that shows to night and day  
    White violets there.

A child's light hands, whose touch makes flowers  
    more fair,  
Keep fair as these for many a March and May  
The light of days that are because they were.

It shall not like a blossom pass away ;  
It broods and brightens with the days that bear  
Fresh fruits of love, but leave, as love might pray,  
    White violets there.



## THREE WEEKS OLD

THREE weeks since there was no such rose in being ;  
Now may eyes made dim with deep delight  
See how fair it is, laugh with love, and seeing  
Praise the chance that bids us bless the sight.

Three weeks old, and a very rose of roses,  
Bright and sweet as love is sweet and bright.  
Heaven and earth, till a man's life wanes and closes,  
Show not life or love a lovelier sight.

Three weeks past have renewed the rosebright  
creature  
Day by day with life, and night by night.  
Love, though fain of its every faultless feature,  
Finds not words to match the silent sight.

## A CLASP OF HANDS

## I

SOFT, small, and sweet as sunniest flowers  
 That bask in heavenly heat  
 When bud by bud breaks, breathes, and cowers,  
 Soft, small, and sweet.

A babe's hands open as to greet  
 The tender touch of ours  
 And mock with motion faint and fleet

The minutes of the new strange hours  
 That earth, not heaven, must mete ;  
 Buds fragrant still from heaven's own bowers,  
 Soft, small, and sweet.

## II

A velvet vice with springs of steel  
 That fasten in a trice  
 And clench the fingers fast that feel  
 A velvet vice—

What man would risk the danger twice,  
 Nor quake from head to heel?  
 Whom would not one such test suffice?

Well may we tremble as we kneel  
In sight of Paradise,  
If both a babe's closed fists conceal  
A velvet vice.

## III

Two flower-soft fists of conquering clutch,  
Two creased and dimpled wrists,  
That match, if mottled overmuch,  
Two flower-soft fists—

What heart of man dare hold the lists  
Against such odds and such  
Sweet vantage as no strength resists?

Our strength is all a broken crutch,  
Our eyes are dim with mists,  
Our hearts are prisoners as we touch  
Two flower-soft fists.

## PROLOGUE TO DOCTOR FAUSTUS

LIGHT, as when dawn takes wing and smites the sea,  
 Smote England when his day bade Marlowe be.  
 No fire so keen had thrilled the clouds of time  
 Since Dante's breath made Italy sublime.  
 Earth, bright with flowers whose dew shone soft as  
 tears,

Through Chaucer cast her charm on eyes and ears :  
 The lustrous laughter of the love-lit earth  
 Rang, leapt, and lightened in his might of mirth.  
 Deep moonlight, hallowing all the breathless air,  
 Made earth and heaven for Spenser faint and fair.  
 But song might bid not heaven and earth be one  
 Till Marlowe's voice gave warning of the sun.  
 Thought quailed and fluttered as a wounded bird  
 Till passion fledged the wing of Marlowe's word.  
 Faith born of fear bade hope and doubt be dumb  
 Till Marlowe's pride bade light or darkness come.  
 Then first our speech was thunder : then our song  
 Shot lightning through the clouds that wrought us  
 wrong.

Blind fear, whose faith feeds hell with fire, became  
 A moth self-shrivelled in its own blind flame.  
 We heard, in tune with even our seas that roll,  
 The speech of storm, the thunders of the soul.

Men's passions, clothed with all the woes they wrought,  
 Shone through the fire of man's transfiguring thought.  
 The thirst of knowledge, quenchless at her springs,  
 Ambition, fire that clasps the thrones of kings,  
 Love, light that makes of life one lustrous hour,  
 And song, the soul's chief crown and throne of power,  
 The hungering heart of greed and ravenous hate,  
 Made music high as heaven and deep as fate.  
 Strange pity, scarce half scornful of her tear,  
 In Berkeley's vaults bowed down on Edward's bier.  
 But higher in forceful flight of song than all  
 The soul of man, its own imperious thrall,  
 Rose, when his royal spirit of fierce desire  
 Made life and death for man one flame of fire.  
 Incarnate man, fast bound as earth and sea,  
 Spake, when his pride would fain set Faustus free.  
 Eternal beauty, strong as day and night,  
 Shone, when his word bade Helen back to sight.  
 Fear, when he bowed the soul before her spell,  
 Thundered and lightened through the vaults of hell.  
 The music known of all men's tongues that sing,  
 When Marlowe sang, bade love make heaven of  
 spring ;  
 The music none but English tongues may make,  
 Our own sole song, spake first when Marlowe spake ;  
 And on his grave, though there no stone may stand,  
 The flower it shows was laid by Shakespeare's hand.

## PROLOGUE TO ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM

LOVE dark as death and fierce as fire on wing  
 Sustains in sin the soul that feels it cling  
 Like flame whose tongues are serpents : hope and fear  
 Die when a love more dire than hate draws near,  
 And stings to death the heart it cleaves in twain,  
 And leaves in ashes all but fear and pain.  
 Our lustrous England rose to life and light  
 From Rome's and hell's immitigable night,  
 And music laughed and quickened from her breath,  
 When first her sons acclaimed Elizabeth.  
 Her soul became a lyre that all men heard  
 Who felt their souls give back her lyric word.  
 Yet now not all at once her perfect power  
 Spake : man's deep heart abode awhile its hour,  
 Abode its hour of utterance ; not to wake  
 Till Marlowe's thought in thunderous music spake.  
 But yet not yet was passion's tragic breath  
 Thrilled through with sense of instant life and death,  
 Life actual even as theirs who watched the strife,  
 Death dark and keen and terrible as life.  
 Here first was truth in song made perfect : here  
 Woke first the war of love and hate and fear.  
 A man too vile for thought's or shame's control  
 Holds empire on a woman's loftier soul,



And withers it to wickedness : in vain  
Shame quickens thought with penitential pain :  
In vain dark chance's fitful providence  
Withholds the crime, and chills the spirit of sense :  
It wakes again in fire that burns away  
Repentance, weak as night devoured of day.  
Remorse, and ravenous thirst of sin and crime,  
Rend and consume the soul in strife sublime,  
And passion cries on pity till it hear  
And tremble as with love that casts out fear.  
Dark as the deed and doom he gave to fame  
For ever lies the sovereign singer's name.  
Sovereign and regent on the soul he lives  
While thought gives thanks for aught remembrance  
gives,  
And mystery sees the imperial shadow stand  
By Marlowe's side alone at Shakespeare's hand.



## PROLOGUE TO OLD FORTUNATUS

THE golden bells of fairyland, that ring  
 Perpetual chime for childhood's flower-sweet spring,  
 Sang soft memorial music in his ear  
 Whose answering music shines about us here.  
 Soft laughter as of light that stirs the sea  
 With darkling sense of dawn ere dawn may be,  
 Kind sorrow, pity touched with gentler scorn,  
 Keen wit whose shafts were sunshafts of the morn,  
 Love winged with fancy, fancy thrilled with love,  
 An eagle's aim and ardour in a dove,  
 A man's delight and passion in a child,  
 Inform it as when first they wept and smiled.  
 Life, soiled and rent and ringed about with pain  
 Whose touch lent action less of spur than chain,  
 Left half the happiness his birth designed,  
 And half the power, unquenched in heart and mind.  
 Comrade and comforter, sublime in shame,  
 A poor man bound in prison whence he came  
 Poor, and took up the burden of his life  
 Smiling, and strong to strive with sorrow and strife,  
 He spake in England's ear the poor man's word,  
 Manful and mournful, deathless and unheard.  
 His kind great heart was fire, and love's own fire,  
 Compassion, strong as flesh may feel desire,

To enkindle pity and mercy toward a soul  
 Sunk down in shame too deep for shame's control.  
 His kind keen eye was light to lighten hope  
 Where no man else might see life's darkness ope  
 And pity's touch bring forth from evil good,  
 Sweet as forgiveness, strong as fatherhood.  
 Names higher than his outshine it and outsoar,  
 But none save one should memory cherish more :  
 Praise and thanksgiving crown the names above,  
 But him we give the gift he gave us, love.

## PROLOGUE TO THE DUCHESS OF MALFY

WHEN Shakespeare soared from life to death, above  
 All praise, all adoration, save of love,  
 As here on earth above all men he stood  
 That were or are or shall be—great, and good,  
 Past thank or thought of England or of man—  
 Light from the sunset quickened as it ran.  
 His word, who sang as never man may sing  
 And spake as never voice of man may ring,  
 Not fruitless fell, as seed on sterile ways,  
 But brought forth increase even to Shakespeare's  
     praise.

Our skies were thrilled and filled, from sea to sea,  
 With stars outshining all their suns to be.  
 No later light of tragic song they knew  
 Like his whose lightning clove the sunset through.  
 Half Shakespeare's glory, when his hand sublime  
 Bade all the change of tragic life and time  
 Live, and outlive all date of quick and dead,  
 Fell, rested, and shall rest on Webster's head.  
 Round him the shadows cast on earth by light  
 Rose, changed, and shone, transfiguring death and  
     night.

Where evil only crawled and hissed and slew  
 On ways where nought save shame and bloodshed  
     grew,

## 412 PROLOGUE TO THE DUCHESS OF MALFY

He bade the loyal light of honour live,  
 And love, when stricken through the heart, forgive.  
 Deep down the midnight of the soul of sin  
 He lit the star of mercy throned therein.  
 High up the darkness of sublime despair  
 He set the sun of love to triumph there.  
 Things foul or frail his touch made strong and pure,  
 And bade things transient like to stars endure.  
 Terror, on wings whose flight made night in heaven,  
 Pity, with hands whence life took love for leaven,  
 Breathed round him music whence his mortal breath  
 Drew life that bade forgetfulness and death  
 Die : life that bids his light of fiery fame  
 Endure with England's, yea, with Shakespeare's  
     name.

## PROLOGUE TO THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY

FIRE, and behind the breathless flight of fire  
 Thunder that quickens fear and quells desire,  
 Make bright and loud the terror of the night  
 Wherein the soul sees only wrath for light.  
 Wrath winged by love and sheathed by grief in steel  
 Sets on the front of crime death's withering seal.  
 The heaving horror of the storms of sin  
 Brings forth in fear the lightning hid therein,  
 And flashes back to darkness : truth, found pure  
 And perfect, asks not heaven if shame endure.  
 What life and death were his whose raging song  
 Bore heaven such witness of the wild world's wrong,  
 What hand was this that grasped such thunder, none  
 Knows: night and storm seclude him from the sun.  
 By daytime none discerns the fire of Mars :  
 Deep darkness bares to sight the sterner stars,  
 The lights whose dawn seems doomsday. None may  
 tell

Whence rose a world so lit from heaven and hell.  
 Life-wasting love, hate born of raging lust,  
 Fierce retribution, fed with death's own dust  
 And sorrow's pampering poison, cross and meet,  
 And wind the world in passion's winding-sheet.  
 So, when dark faith in faith's dark ages heard  
 Falsehood, and drank the poison of the Word,

Two shades misshapen came to monstrous birth,  
 A father fiend in heaven, a thrall on earth :  
 Man, meanest born of beasts that press the sod,  
 And die : the vilest of his creatures, God.  
 A judge unjust, a slave that praised his name,  
 Made life and death one fire of sin and shame.  
 And thence reverberate even on Shakespeare's age  
 A light like darkness crossed his sunbright stage.  
 Music, sublime as storm or sorrow, sang  
 Before it : tempest like a harpstring rang.  
 The fiery shadow of a name unknown  
 Rose, and in song's high heaven abides alone.



## PROLOGUE TO THE BROKEN HEART

THE mightiest choir of song that memory hears  
 Gave England voice for fifty lustrous years.  
 Sunrise and thunder fired and shook the skies  
 That saw the sun-god Marlowe's opening eyes.  
 The morn's own music, answered of the sea,  
 Spake, when his living lips bade Shakespeare be,  
 And England, made by Shakespeare's quickening  
 breath

Divine and deathless even till life be death,  
 Brought forth to time such godlike sons of men  
 That shamefaced love grows pride, and now seems  
 then.

Shame that their day so shone, so sang, so died,  
 Remembering, finds remembrance one with pride.  
 That day was clouding toward a stormlit close  
 When Ford's red sphere upon the twilight rose.  
 Sublime with stars and sunset fire, the sky  
 Glowed as though day, nigh dead, should never die.  
 Sorrow supreme and strange as chance or doom  
 Shone, spake, and shuddered through the lustrous  
 gloom.

Tears lit with love made all the darkening air  
 Bright as though death's dim sunrise thrilled it there  
 And life re-risen took comfort. Stern and still  
 As hours and years that change and anguish fill,



## 416 PROLOGUE TO THE BROKEN HEART

The strong secluded spirit, ere it woke,  
Dwelt dumb till power possessed it, and it spoke.  
Strange, calm, and sure as sense of beast or bird,  
Came forth from night the thought that breathed the  
word ;

That chilled and thrilled with passion-stricken breath  
Halls where Calantha trod the dance of death.  
A strength of soul too passionately pure  
To change for aught that horror bids endure,  
To quail and wail and weep faint life away  
Ere sovereign sorrow smite, relent, and slay,  
Sustained her silent, till her bridal bloom  
Changed, smiled, and waned in rapture toward the  
tomb.

Terror twin-born with pity kissed and thrilled  
The lips that Shakespeare's word or Webster's filled :  
Here both, cast out, fell silent : pity shrank,  
Rebuked, and terror, spirit-stricken, sank :  
The soul assailed arose afar above  
All reach of all but only death and love.

## PROLOGUE TO A VERY WOMAN

SWIFT music made of passion's changeful power,  
 Sweet as the change that leaves the world in flower  
 When spring laughs winter down to deathward, rang  
 From grave and gracious lips that smiled and sang  
 When Massinger, too wise for kings to hear  
 And learn of him truth, wisdom, faith, or fear,  
 Gave all his gentler heart to love's light lore,  
 That grief might brood and scorn breed wrath no  
     more.

Soft, bright, fierce, tender, fitful, truthful, sweet,  
 A shrine where faith and change might smile and  
     meet,

A soul whose music could but shift its tune  
 As when the lustrous year turns May to June  
 And spring subsides in summer, so makes good  
 Its perfect claim to very womanhood.

The heart that hate of wrong made fire, the hand  
 Whose touch was fire as keen as shame's own brand  
 When fraud and treason, swift to smile and sting,  
 Crowned and discrowned a tyrant, knave or king,  
 False each and ravenous as the fitful sea,  
 Grew gently glad as love that fear sets free.  
 Like eddying ripples that the wind restrains,  
 The bright words whisper music ere it wanes.

418 PROLOGUE TO A VERY WOMAN

Ere fades the sovereign sound of song that rang  
As though the sun to match the sea's tune sang,  
When noon from dawn took life and light, and time  
Shone, seeing how Shakespeare made the world  
sublime,  
Ere sinks the wind whose breath was heaven's and  
day's,  
The sunset's witness gives the sundawn praise.

## PROLOGUE TO THE SPANISH GIPSY

THE wind that brings us from the springtide south  
 Strange music as from love's or life's own mouth  
 Blew hither, when the blast of battle ceased  
 That swept back southward Spanish prince and priest,  
 A sound more sweet than April's flower-sweet rain,  
 And bade bright England smile on pardoned Spain.  
 The land that cast out Philip and his God  
 Grew gladly subject where Cervantes trod.  
 Even he whose name above all names on earth  
 Crowns England queen by grace of Shakespeare's birth  
 Might scarce have scorned to smile in God's wise down  
 And gild with praise from heaven an earthlier crown.  
 And he whose hand bade live down lengthening years  
 Quixote, a name lit up with smiles and tears,  
 Gave the glad watchword of the gipsies' life,  
 Where fear took hope and grief took joy to wife.  
 Times change, and fame is fitful as the sea :  
 But sunset bids not darkness always be,  
 And still some light from Shakespeare and the sun  
 Burns back the cloud that masks not Middleton.  
 With strong swift strokes of love and wrath he drew  
 Shakespearean London's loud and lusty crew :  
 No plainer might the likeness rise and stand  
 When Hogarth took his living world in hand.

## 420 PROLOGUE TO THE SPANISH GIPSY

No surer then his fire-fledged shafts could hit,  
Winged with as forceful and as faithful wit :  
No truer a tragic depth and heat of heart  
Glowed through the painter's than the poet's art.  
He lit and hung in heaven the wan fierce moon  
Whose glance kept time with witchcraft's air-struck  
tune :

He watched the doors where loveless love let in  
The pageant hailed and crowned by death and sin  
He bared the souls where love, twin-born with hate,  
Made wide the way for passion-fostered fate.  
All English-hearted, all his heart arose  
To scourge with scorn his England's cowering foes :  
And Rome and Spain, who bade their scorner be  
Their prisoner, left his heart as England's free.  
Now give we all we may of all his due  
To one long since thus tried and found thus true.

## PROLOGUE TO THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN

SWEET as the dewfall, splendid as the south,  
 Love touched with speech Boccaccio's golden mouth,  
 Joy thrilled and filled its utterance full with song,  
 And sorrow smiled on doom that wrought no wrong.  
 A starrier lustre of lordlier music rose  
 Beyond the sundering bar of seas and snows  
 When Chaucer's thought took life and light from his  
 And England's crown was one with Italy's.  
 Loftiest and last, by grace of Shakespeare's word,  
 Arose above their quiring spheres a third,  
 Arose, and flashed, and faltered : song's deep sky  
 Saw Shakespeare pass in light, in music die.  
 No light like his, no music, man might give  
 To bid the darkened sphere, left songless, live.  
 Soft though the sound of Fletcher's rose and rang  
 And lit the lunar darkness as it sang,  
 Below the singing stars the cloud-crossed moon  
 Gave back the sunken sun's a trembling tune.  
 As when at highest high tide the sovereign sea  
 Pauses, and patience doubts if passion be,  
 Till gradual ripples ebb, recede, recoil,  
 Shine, smile, and whisper, laughing as they toil,  
 Stark silence fell, at turn of fate's high tide,  
 Upon his broken song when Shakespeare died,

Till Fletcher's light sweet speech took heart to say  
What evening, should it speak for morning, may.  
And fourfold now the gradual glory shines  
That shows once more in heaven two twinborn signs,  
Two brethren stars whose light no cloud may fret,  
No soul whereon their story dawns forget.



## THE AFTERGLOW OF SHAKESPEARE

LET there be light, said Time : and England heard :  
 And manhood grew to godhead at the word.  
 No light had shone, since earth arose from sleep,  
 So far ; no fire of thought had cloven so deep.  
 A day beyond all days bade life acclaim  
 Shakespeare : and man put on his crowning name.  
 All secrets once through darkling ages kept  
 Shone, sang, and smiled to think how long they slept.  
 Man rose past fear of lies whereon he trod :  
 And Dante's ghost saw hell devour his God.  
 Bright Marlowe, brave as winds that brave the sea  
 When sundawn bids their bliss in battle be,  
 Lit England first along the ways whereon  
 Song brighter far than sunlight soared and shone.  
 He died ere half his life had earned his right  
 To lighten time with song's triumphant light.  
 Hope shrank, and felt the stroke at heart : but one  
 She knew not rose, a man to match the sun.  
 And England's hope and time's and man's became  
 Joy, deep as music's heart and keen as flame.  
 Not long, for heaven on earth may live not long,  
 Light sang, and darkness died before the song.  
 He passed, the man above all men, whose breath  
 Transfigured life with speech that lightens death.  
 He passed : but yet for many a lustrous year  
 His light of song bade England shine and hear.

As plague and fire and faith in falsehood spread,  
 So from the man of men, divine and dead,  
 Contagious godhead, seen, unknown, and heard,  
 Fulfilled and quickened England ; thought and word,  
 When men would fain set life to music, grew  
 More sweet than years which knew not Shakespeare  
     knew.

The simplest soul that set itself to song  
 Sang, and may fear not time's or change's wrong.  
 The lightest eye that glanced on life could see  
 Through grief and joy the God that man might be.  
 All passion whence the living soul takes fire  
 Till death fulfil despair and quench desire,  
 All love that lightens through the cloud of chance,  
 All hate that lurks in hope and smites askance,  
 All holiness of sorrow, all divine  
 Pity, whose tears are stars that save and shine,  
 All sunbright strength of laughter like the sea's  
 When spring and autumn loose their lustrous breeze,  
 All sweet, all strange, all sad, all glorious things,  
 Lived on his lips, and hailed him king of kings.  
 All thought, all strife, all anguish, all delight,  
 Spake all he bade, and speak till day be night.  
 No soul that heard, no spirit that beheld,  
 Knew not the God that lured them and compelled.  
 On Beaumont's brow the sun arisen afar  
 Shed fire which lit through heaven the younger star  
 That sank before the sunset : one dark spring  
 Slew first the kinglike subject, then the king.  
 The glory left above their graves made strong  
 The heart of Fletcher, till the flower-sweet song  
 That Shakespeare culled from Chaucer's field, and  
     died,  
 Found ending on his lips that smiled and sighed.

From Dekker's eyes the light of tear-touched mirth  
Shone as from Shakespeare's, mingling heaven and  
earth.

Wild witchcraft's lure and England's love made one  
With Shakespeare's heart the heart of Middleton.  
Harsh, homely, true, and tragic, Rowley told  
His heart's debt down in rough and radiant gold.  
The skies that Tourneur's lightning clove and rent  
Flamed through the clouds where Shakespeare's  
thunder went.

Wise Massinger bade kings be wise in vain  
Ere war bade song, storm-stricken, cower and wane.  
Kind Heywood, simple-souled and single-eyed,  
Found voice for England's home-born praise and  
pride.

Strange grief, strange love, strange terror, bared the  
sword

That smote the soul by grace and will of Ford.  
The stern grim strength of Chapman's thought found  
speech

Loud as when storm at ebb-tide rends the beach :  
And all the honey brewed from flowers in May  
Made sweet the lips and bright the dreams of Day.  
But even as Shakespeare caught from Marlowe's word  
Fire, so from his the thunder-bearing third,  
Webster, took light and might whence none but he  
Hath since made song that sounded so the sea  
Whose waves are lives of men—whose tidestream rolls  
From year to darkening year the freight of souls.  
Alone above it, sweet, supreme, sublime,  
Shakespeare attunes the jarring chords of time ;  
Alone of all whose doom is death and birth,  
Shakespeare is lord of souls alive on earth.

the first of these was the establishment of a permanent government for the territory of the United States, which was done in 1790.

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## CLEOPATRA

“ Her beauty might outface the jealous hours,  
Turn shame to love and pain to a tender sleep,  
And the strong nerve of hate to sloth and tears ;  
Make spring rebellious in the sides of frost,  
Thrust out lank winter with hot August growths,  
Compel sweet blood into the husks of death,  
And from strange beasts enforce harsh courtesy.”

T. HAYMAN, *Fall of Antony*, 1655.

## CLEOPATRA

HER mouth is fragrant as a vine,  
 A vine with birds in all its boughs ;  
 Serpent and scarab for a sign  
 Between the beauty of her brows  
 And the amorous deep lids divine.

## II

Her great curled hair makes luminous  
 Her cheeks, her lifted throat and chin.  
 Shall she not have the hearts of us  
 To shatter, and the loves therein  
 To shred between her fingers thus ?

## III

Small ruined broken strays of light,  
 Pearl after pearl she shreds them through  
 Her long sweet sleepy fingers, white  
 As any pearl's heart veined with blue,  
 And soft as dew on a soft night.



## IV

As if the very eyes of love  
Shone through her shutting lids, and stole  
The slow looks of a snake or dove ;  
As if her lips absorbed the whole  
Of love, her soul the soul thereof.

## V

Lost, all the lordly pearls that were  
Wrung from the sea's heart, from the green  
Coasts of the Indian gulf-river ;  
Lost, all the loves of the world—so keen  
Towards this queen for love of her.

## VI

You see against her throat the small  
Sharp glittering shadows of them shake ;  
And through her hair the imperial  
Curled likeness of the river snake,  
Whose bite shall make an end of all.

## VII

Through the scales sheathing him like wings,  
Through hieroglyphs of gold and gem,  
The strong sense of her beauty stings,  
Like a keen pulse of love in them,  
A running flame through all his rings.

## VIII

Under those low large lids of hers  
She hath the histories of all time ;  
The fruit of foliage-stricken years ;  
The old seasons with their heavy chime  
That leaves its rhyme in the world's ears.

## IX

She sees the hand of death made bare,  
The ravelled riddle of the skies,  
The faces faded that were fair,  
The mouths made speechless that were wise,  
The hollow eyes and dusty hair ;

## X

The shape and shadow of mystic things,  
Things that fate fashions or forbids ;  
The staff of time-forgotten Kings  
Whose name falls off the Pyramids,  
Their coffin-lids and grave-clothings ;

## XI

Dank dregs, the scum of pool or clod,  
God-spawn of lizard-footed clans,  
And those dog-headed hulks that trod  
Swart necks of the old Egyptians,  
Raw draughts of man's beginning God ;

## XII

The poised hawk, quivering ere he smote,  
With plume-like gems on breast and back ;  
The asps and water-worms afloat  
Between the rush-flowers moist and slack ;  
The cat's warm black bright rising throat.

## XIII

The purple days of drouth expand  
Like a scroll opened out again ;  
The molten heaven drier than sand,  
The hot red heaven without rain,  
Sheds iron pain on the empty land.

## XIV

All Egypt aches in the sun's sight ;  
The lips of men are harsh for drouth,  
The fierce air leaves their cheeks burnt white,  
Charred by the bitter blowing south,  
Whose dusty mouth is sharp to bite.

## XV

All this she dreams of, and her eyes  
Are wrought after the sense hereof.  
There is no heart in her for sighs ;  
The face of her is more than love—  
A name above the Ptolemies.

## XVI

Her great grave beauty covers her  
As that sleek spoil beneath her feet  
Clothed once the anointed soothsayer ;  
The hallowing is gone forth from it  
Now, made unmeet for priests to wear.

## XVII

She treads on gods and god-like things,  
On fate and fear and life and death,  
On hate that cleaves and love that clings,  
All that is brought forth of man's breath  
And perisheth with what it brings.

## XVIII

She holds her future close, her lips  
Hold fast the face of things to be ;  
Action, and sound of war that dips  
Down the blown valleys of the sea,  
Far sails that flee, and storms of ships ;

## XIX

The laughing red sweet mouth of wine  
At ending of life's festival ;  
That spice of cerecloths, and the fine  
White bitter dust funereal  
Sprinkled on all things for a sign ;

## XX

His face, who was and was not he,  
In whom, alive, her life abode ;  
The end, when she gained heart to see  
Those ways of death wherein she trod,  
Goddess by god, with Antony.

## DEDICATION





## DEDICATION

THE sea that is life everlasting  
And death everlasting as life  
Abides not a pilot's forecasting,  
Foretells not of peace or of strife.  
The might of the night that was hidden  
Arises and darkens the day,  
A glory rebuked and forbidden,  
Time's crown, and his prey.

No sweeter, no kindlier, no fairer,  
No lovelier a soul from its birth  
Wore ever a brighter and rarer  
Life's raiment for life upon earth  
Than his who enkindled and cherished  
Art's vestal and luminous flame,  
That dies not when kingdoms have perished  
In storm or in shame.

No braver, no trustier, no purer,  
No stronger and clearer a soul  
Bore witness more splendid and surer  
For manhood found perfect and whole  
Since man was a warrior and dreamer  
Than his who in hatred of wrong  
Would fain have arisen a redeemer  
By sword or by song.

Twin brethren in spirit, immortal  
As art and as love, which were one  
For you from the birthday whose portal  
First gave you to sight of the sun,  
To-day nor to-night nor to-morrow  
May bring you again from above,  
Drawn down by the spell of the sorrow  
Whose anguish is love.

No light rearising hereafter.  
Shall lighten us here as of old  
When seasons were lustrous as laughter  
Of waves that are snowshine and gold.  
The dawn that imbues and enkindles  
Life's fluctuant and fugitive sea  
Dies down as the starshine that dwindles  
And cares not to be.

Men, mightier than death which divides us,  
Friends, dearer than sorrow can say,  
The light that is darkness and hides us  
Awhile from each other away  
Abides but awhile and endures not,  
We know, though the day be as night,  
For souls that forgetfulness lures not  
Till sleep be in sight.

The sleep that enfolds you, the slumber  
Supreme and eternal on earth,  
Whence ages of numberless number  
Shall bring us not back into birth,  
We know not indeed if it be not  
What no man hath known if it be,  
Life, quickened with light that we see not  
If spirits may see.

The love that would see and would know it  
Is even as the love of a child.  
But the fire of the fame of the poet  
Who gazed on the past, and it smiled,  
But the light of the fame of the painter  
Whose hand was as morning's in May,  
Death bids not be darker or fainter,  
Time casts not away.

We, left of them loveless and lonely,  
Who lived in the light of their love,  
Whose darkness desires it, we only,  
Who see them afar and above,  
So far, if we die not, above us,  
So lately no dearer than near,  
May know not of death if they love us,  
Of night if they hear.

We, stricken and darkling and living,  
Who loved them and love them, abide  
A day, and the gift of its giving,  
An hour, and the turn of its tide,  
When twilight and midnight and morrow  
Shall pass from the sight of the sun,  
And death be forgotten, and sorrow  
Discrowned and undone.

For us as for these will the breathless  
Brief minute arise and pass by :  
And if death be not utterly deathless,  
If love do not utterly die,  
From the life that is quenched as an ember  
The soul that aspires as a flame  
Can choose not but wholly remember  
Love, lovelier than fame.

## DEDICATION

Though sure be the seal of their glory  
And fairer no fame upon earth,  
Though never a leaf shall grow hoary  
Of the crowns that were given them at birth,  
While time as a vassal doth duty  
To names that he towers not above,  
More perfect in price and in beauty  
For ever is love.

The night is upon us, and anguish  
Of longing that yearns for the dead.  
But mourners that faint not or languish,  
That veil not and bow not the head,  
Take comfort to heart if a token  
Be given them of comfort to be :  
While darkness on earth is unbroken,  
Light lives on the sea.





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